

WARRIOR

Summer 2011







HRH The Duke of Cambridge receives a gift of a commemorative flight helmet presented by the crew of the Waterbird (*Photo by Holly Bridges*).

Shearwater Aviation
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**HRH The Duke of Cambridge lands the Waterbird
on Dalvay Lake (Photo by Cpl Rick Ayer)**

Some fields of human endeavour endure and become routine, while others are cut off before their time but live on in the memory to become legendary. Such was the fate of Canadian Carrier-borne Aviation. In 25 years, aircraft of the Royal Canadian Navy reached their peak of efficiency flying from HMCS BONAVENTURE. Their achievements were equaled by few, if any, Navies of the World.

Vice Admiral J. C. (Scruffy) O'Brien

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SAM Foundation
PO Box 5000 Stn Main
Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

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To contact us:

samf@samfoundation.ca
kcollacutt@eastlink.ca

1-888-497-7779 (toll free)
(902) 461-0062 (local)
(902) 461-1610 (fax) or (902) 720-2037 (fax)

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SAMF website: www.samfoundation.ca

Newsletter/Website Staff:

Editor:	Kay Collacutt
Nsltr Cover Designer:	Jamie Archibald
Photo Coordinator:	Ron Beard
Assistants	Patti Gemmell Ken Millar Ken Brown

FRONT COVER PHOTO:

HRH The Duke of Cambridge at the controls of the CF Sea King Waterbird (Photo by Cpl Rick Ayer).

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ROYAL WATERBIRD

Colonel Sam Michaud, Wing Commander 12 Wing

Having the opportunity to meet and talk with members of the Royal family is a rare treat for most Canadians. But having the chance to actually fly with the future King is truly a once in a lifetime opportunity. In an incredible turn of events, 12 Wing had just that opportunity during the recent tour of Canada by Their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Thanks to a personal request from His Royal Highness (HRH), Prince William, we were invited to conduct Waterbird training with him during the couple's visit to Prince Edward Island. After much detailed planning and inter-agency coordination by a team led by Major Mark Kotzer, we were quickly able to confirm our ability to support this request and set in motion an extraordinary experience.

Selected to fly this mission were myself, as the primary Waterbird instructor pilot; Captain Josh Willemsen, as the back-up Waterbird instructor pilot; and Lieutenant-Colonel (then Major) Patrick MacNamara, as the TACCO for the mission. Contrary to popular myth, the selection process to determine the flight crew was not the ever popular game of "Rock... Paper... Rank." Joining us as the technical crew for the trip would be Sergeant Dan Hatfield, Master Corporal Brad Arnold, and Master Corporal Jonathan Goodland – all handpicked for their professionalism and technical abilities. In their capable hands would be placed the responsibility of ensuring that the Waterbird was in top condition for her historic flight.

Our adventure began with the six of us flying the Waterbird (CH12436) up to Charlottetown on Sunday, 3 July 2011. We stopped briefly to drop our crack technical team off at the airport before continuing on to Dalvay Lake for a quick recce and practice session. After the short eight mile flight from Charlottetown to Dalvay by the Sea, we landed next to the lake at the cottage landing zone where we were to pick up HRH the following day, and confirmed that it would be big enough – despite the surrounding trees – for us to fly into regardless of wind direction.

We then headed over to Dalvay Lake, which was immediately adjacent to the cottage, to check out the

assigned training area and conduct a brief assessment of its usable area. The lake itself is much smaller and shallower than the area normally used on Morris Lake but it appeared to be "good enough" when first chosen as the site. However, once on the surface, it quickly became evident that almost half the area was too shallow to use and much of the lake was choked with weeds. The usable area that was left would be quite "sporting" to say the least. Nonetheless, we had an ideal southerly wind for the practice session so we pounded out a few landings and take-offs to quickly assess the approaches, landing area, and overshoots. After a few runs, it was clear that we would only be able to do single engine water take-offs if we had a northerly or southerly wind since the cross lake direction – besides taking us directly over the viewing areas where thousands of spectators were to be seated – was far too narrow.

To make life even more interesting, trees on both the approach and overshoot paths would further limit options on the N-S direction. Despite these challenges, we assessed Dalvay Lake as workable, which was fortunate since there were no alternatives available.

After returning to Charlottetown, we checked into the hotel, quickly got cleaned up, and then headed off to the private reception where we were to meet the Royal couple. Our first headache came when we arrived at Peakes Quay and the security staff could not find us on any approved invitee list. After several minutes of hanging around and being persistent while trying not to irritate the guys with the guns, we were let into the reception. We were then ushered into a smaller room where those of us who would be working with the next day's events were to be "presented" to the Royal couple.

This was followed by another long period of waiting as the timings had slipped by almost an hour. The first sign that the Royal couple had arrived was the crescendo of screams and cheers from outside as their motorcade pulled up. We were quickly ushered into our assigned positions in the receiving line as the Royal couple walked in and started working their way down the line. The three of us stood out because we had decided to stay in flightsuits while everyone else was in business suits. The Prince quickly noticed us and came over to ask if we were the ones who he would be flying with the next day. After a quick "affirmative" his face lit up and he started talking enthusiastically about how excited he was to get the chance to fly the Waterbird. He was very animated as he talked about how getting to fly the Waterbird was a rare treat for RAF pilots, usually reserved only for senior instructors, and how he had to "pull rank" to get the opportunity. The Duchess came along right behind him and, noticing our flightsuits, asked us to "take care of her husband" the next day.

The couple then went into the main reception area and we stayed behind to grab a member of the staff to ask about

the private audience we had been promised later that evening to brief HRH and have him watch the Waterbird training video. That's when we found out that this time had become a casualty of the delayed schedule and that we had just had all the time we would get prior to the flight. Beyond the obvious problem with missing the brief, we also had a gift that we wanted to present to HRH and so we asked the staff if we could do it at the reception. Headache number two was upon us as we soon realized flexibility is apparently not the key to Royal event planning... but, after much negotiation, we were lucky enough to have the Royal Equerry, Captain Jean Leroux, show up and take the lead in setting up an opportunity to present the commemorative helmet at the end of the reception. This specially pre-pared helmet was the result of a collaborative effort between 12 Wing graphic artist Steve Coyle and local artist Travis Roma. The helmet had received a custom paint job adorned with imagery designed to commemorate the event and was absolutely stunning.

As the couple exited the reception area, we had a small table set up with the helmet on it, ready for presentation. The Duchess was the first to walk up and she was clearly impressed with the thoughtfulness of the gift. The Duke came along moments later and was astounded by the detail in the artwork and the craftsmanship of the stand. None of the photos do it justice; this was a true "one-of-a-kind" work of art. As he left, he thanked us for the gift and again expressed his great anticipation for the next day's trip.

The 4th of July dawned overcast and threatening rain. The forecasts looked quite gloomy but held some promise for a departure in marginally VFR weather for the flight to the lake. Fortunately, the advancing weather front lost much of its punch as it hit the Northumberland Strait and things were looking pretty good by our scheduled launch time. We zipped up to the cottage at Dalvay Lake and circled for a few minutes waiting for our appointed time to arrive.

Accompanying us was Master Corporal Patricia Lockhart, a safety systems technician from 12 AMS, who would be responsible for quickly fitting the Duke with the Canadian flight gear that he would be wearing for the trip. Waiting for us on the ground at Dalvay were Major Mark Kotzer and Captain Ryan Lawrence, who would provide critical ground coordination for us with the staggering number of agencies involved with the Royal tour.

After a quick approach into the cottage landing zone, the crew left me in the aircraft as they went to go get the Prince kitted up with flight gear. As I waited alone in 436, I started to become aware of just how many cameras were arrayed around the helicopter. I began to feel bit sorry for HRH having to jump into the Waterbird and fly a demanding profile, in an unfamiliar aircraft, with so many eyes on him. It was to become an inspirational moment

for me, as I contemplated the personal courage HRH was demonstrating in taking on such a challenge where any minor mistake would be instantly recorded forever by any one of the thousands of cameras circling the lake.



HRH The Duke of Cambridge just prior to boarding the Waterbird.

A few minutes later, HRH emerged from the cottage and began walking towards the helicopter with a look of resolve and anticipation in his eyes. That's when it began to dawn on me that we were actually going to do this. He hopped up the crew steps, plugged in to the intercom system, and asked for clearance into the seat. With the help from Josh Willemsen, he was quickly strapped in, a photo was taken for posterity, and everyone but the crew left the aircraft.

Our hour together had begun.

Once the crew door was buttoned up, I took a minute to familiarize HRH with the cockpit layout, egress procedures, as well as highlight some of the differences from the RAF Mk3 Sea King that he is more familiar with. Still not sure how formal he wanted to make this flight, I asked him how he wanted to be addressed in the aircraft. He looked over and said simply: "Call me William." Of course, I never did screw up enough courage to call him that but it was clear to me that HRH was focussed purely on the training experience and was not concerned with pedestrian matters like adhering to protocol.

Ready for take-off minutes later, I lifted us out of the landing zone and flew a quick left hand circuit to line up on final for Dalvay Lake. Fortunately, we had a southerly wind again and this gave us the optimum approach and departure paths for the usable surface. Within about 90 seconds of leaving the cottage we were touching down on the lake right in front of the main viewing area and I looked over at him and said: "see how easy that is?" Patrick later told me that HRH glanced back at him with a quizzical look as if to say: "yeah, right..."

We let HRH taxi around on the water for a couple of minutes to let him get used to operating on the water's surface before I took control again to demo the dual engine take-off. Quickly airborne, I handed him back control and said: "if you have no questions sir, it's your turn." He set up for a nice wide downwind and then turned onto final still looking grimly focussed. I was happy to note that his aircraft control was very smooth and

accurate as these are critical attributes for success in the Waterbird. A few moments later he was back on the lake, having flown a very nice dual engine approach, and you could see him starting to smile.

From there, we ripped through the full Waterbird syllabus as quickly as I could move him through it – I would fly one demonstration sequence and then he would repeat it several times in practice. We had less time than I would normally have liked but, very fortunately, the Duke proved to be a very capable pilot and a very quick study, so we were able to move through things quite quickly. He did the full Waterbird syllabus, including single engines from the hover on instruments and single engine water take-offs, with no problems at all. In fact, the only mistake during the flight was made by me (and I am not telling you what it was... if you didn't see it, too bad, but the Prince got a good chuckle out of it).

Throughout the flight, he was exceedingly competent and it was evident to me that he takes his profession as a military pilot very seriously. Between each evolution we took a moment to debrief things and I often had to remind myself that this wasn't just a line pilot from 423, this was the future King.

unstrapped, he was grinning from ear-to-ear as he thanked Patrick and me for the flight. It was one of those immensely satisfying moments when he turned to us and said that this was one of his favourite parts of the tour and an event that he had been really looking forward to.

Looking back, I can say that the entire team from 12 Wing came away with a fresh respect for Their Royal Highnesses. They both proved to be engaging, sincere, and friendly people. HRH also comes across as very serious about his responsibilities as a professional military pilot and it was obvious to me that he wasn't just going through the motions during the flight; he very much wanted to fly the Waterbird and derive every benefit possible from this unique training opportunity.

On a final, personal note, I am looking forward to the day of William's coronation when I can say that I flew with him when he was "just" a young Prince. The Waterbird flight with HRH was one of my last flights in the Sea King as my military flying career has drawn to a close and it was truly a great way to put a finishing flourish in my logbook.

All of us who participated in this event were so proud to be chosen to represent the Maritime Helicopter community on such a public stage and to show off the great professionalism that has been the hallmark of naval aviation in Canada since its inception.



The Duchess of Cambridge proudly watches as her husband HRH the Duke of Cambridge lands the Waterbird.

The Duchess watched from the side of the lake with Josh Willemsen by her side to provide commentary and answer any questions she might have; I think he actually may have gotten the better part of the deal in this

whole experience. She left just before we started the single engine take-offs to get changed for the dragon boat races that she and HRH would be participating in that afternoon but it was obvious that she was very proud as she watched her husband prove to be a natural talent in the Waterbird.

The hour passed by so quickly that I had to look at my watch several times before I could really believe that our time together was ending. With the last minutes ticking down, I offered the Duke the aircraft to take back into the landing zone. Clearly comfortable with confined areas by virtue of his training as a Search and Rescue pilot, he flew a tight circuit into the landing zone and put the aircraft back down exactly where we had started from. As he



JPW arriving at Nutt's Corner

NUTT'S CORNER

by Pat Whitby

During the last couple of weeks in August we completed the re-equipping with the XV's which involved taking th

III's down to an a/c depot at Donibristle near Edinburgh and bringing XV's back. The XV had a bigger, more powerful Rolls-Royce Griffon engine which imparted an even longer nose but otherwise it was much like its forerunner. Nice and new tho'. Once we had our new refit we packed up at Arbroath and decamped for Nutt's Corner. The ground crews came by rail and sea and we flew over. I had taken "ownership" of a/c Y for Yoke and was very careful with it.

Nutt's Corner named HMS Pintail soon became known to us as Cracker's Bend. It was very much a wartime airfield with little in the way of comfort and amenities but was not too far from Belfast. The Officer's living block and Wardroom were not too bad but the men had to live in dispersed Nissan huts which were miserable at best. The "management" of the squadron was concerned for their well being and it was decided that two officers should live there as well to keep an eye on things. Jack Sloan and I "volunteered" and moved into a small hut. We were served by a local who kept us tidy and made sure we had fuel for our small stove. We really didn't live too badly.

The squadron was located at a dispersal site across the airfield much the same as our site at Arbroath but we did have a hangar where work could be done on the a/c under shelter. We soon discovered why Ireland was so green - it was cold and wet all the time!! As was the custom we did have squadron transport to get ourselves and the troops back and forth. There was a 1500 cwt. lorry which could carry a good load of people, the CO's Tilley which was a small pickup type with a canvas cover, a motor cycle with side car and a single motorbike. The latter two being used by the pilots. Some of us were better bike drivers than the others. I only came off once! We soon proved the benefits of these two vehicles. We had discovered a small farm a few miles away, typical in that the two-legged folks lived in one half and the four-legged lived in the other. In any event the farm wife, for a good sum of money and some gin would feed us a large spread of bacon and eggs, fried in tons of fat. In our circumstances it was the food of the gods! We used the motor bikes to get there, often as many as ten or twelve would make the journey in one trip. Six or seven on one bike, the rest on the other. We never scraped a knuckle.

Looking ahead

Near the end of August we had learned that Canada was going into the naval aviation business and planned to acquire 2 carriers and that the RCN would therefore require people to man and operate them. At the same time with the war over there were those who wanted to leave the Service and go home. Their wishes were quickly met and in short order about 20 of them including Ian McQuaig departed. At the same time we were told that those of us who wanted to stay on in the RCN and form the nucleus of the new air branch would have to pass a selection board. This was convened in London in early September and was comprised of three Canadians who had served with the

FAA during the war. They were Commander Ted Edwards and Lieut. Commanders Jim Hunter and Tom Darling. Darling soon left the Navy but more will be heard of the other two.

We went to London where a good time was had by all notwithstanding the momentous events effecting our future lives. I was duly quizzed for about an hour and after all had been processed 2 or 3 learned that they had not made it.

The rest of us went back to 803.

To make up for the loss of a lot of the pilots four new ones appeared. Two, Al Bice and George Marlow had just come from the RCAF via the BCATP as new pilots; Bob Monks who was also an ex-instructor and had been flying Hellcats elsewhere in the RN and Barry Hayter another Canadian veteran FAA Corsair pilot with experience in the Tirpitz raids and a qualified Deck Landing Control Officer were our new boys.

Going On

Our training at Nutt's went on as before and we expanded our skills. We began to do a lot of formation flying in cloud which was demanding and could be risky. The flight leader flew on his instruments while the rest kept visual contact on him; in heavy cloud sometimes not easy. We had our second fatality that way. The flight leader in cloud went below the minimum safety height and Len Wade on the outside of the formation flew into the ground. The flight leader was not a popular fellow.

Oxygen climbs became part of the drill. These involved one or more Flights climbing to 30,000'. Not high by today's standards but in those days always exciting. The cockpits were not pressurized, there was virtually no heating and the oxygen system was barely adequate. We had to maintain our tactical viability, sometimes slightly woolen headed because of poor oxygen masks. In the thin air the a/c were also quite sensitive.

There was a radar fighter direction station just south of Belfast and we did a lot of Fighter Direction Exercises (FDX's) with them. This involved two or more Flights going off separately a hundred miles or so and then under radar direction from the ground controller being vectored so that interceptions could be carried out and attacks simulated. FDX's were the main game for fighters since that put them in contact with any hostile a/c. By this time we were pretty good at all facets of fighter work.

In order to broaden our skills 4 photo reconnaissance III's were loaned to us and we worked on taking pictures from the air. There were two large cameras mounted behind the cockpit in each a/c, 1 pointing straight down, the other angled off 45 degrees to the port and operated by the pilot. Vertical photos were taken from a great height and involved tracking over the target to get a good overlapping strip. The side camera was operated from low level and

single shots of special object - bridges, stations, factories etc. It was all good fun and a welcome break from routine. It was on one of these low level sorties that I experienced a forced landing. I was flying along minding my own business when the engine refused to do its thing. I was too low to bailout so was faced with a crash landing where most of the fences were made of stone. When considering my limited options I spotted a runway ahead of me and was able to land wheels down. As I approached it was obvious that the place was inhabited by a large flock of sheep. They heard me and scattered and I rolled to a stop, undamaged on what turned out to be an abandoned RAF airfield on the north shore of Lough Neagh. I finally raised 803 by 'phone and they sent a lorry and the Senior Pilot over. They tried to start the a/c and it did! With many black looks in my direction Des flew back to Nutts. When I got back I was treated to some verbal abuse. Next morning Deac Logan went off in that same a/c and shortly after landed unexpectedly at another abandoned RAF airfield. This time covered with 4 engine Halifax bombers that were out to pasture. Deac managed to land *under* the wings of the bombers without damage. A large a/c transport truck was dispatched and the a/c returned by road. The engineers were a little more scrupulous in their examination and discovered that a bit of cotton thread had gotten into the works and was restricting the fuel flow at times. I was exonerated but nobody said me a kind word.

In October for Trafalgar Day the RN FAA decided to put on a public air display at the main FAA base at Lee-on-Silent near Portsmouth. 803 had been chosen to put on the formation flying part of the show so we had to make the trip down there. On the day of departure the weather was dreadful; very low ceiling with the cloud tops at 10000'. We had 16 a/c then so the four Flights making the trip were led by the CO, Des, Sandy and Hal Fearon. I was then flying in Sandy's Flight. The plan was that we would take off in Flights, climb up above the cloud, join up and go to Lee. When we broke out on top one of Hal's guys was missing and no contact could be made. It was determined that the missing pilot was Lloyd Nash. Subsequently he was found, still in his a/c not far from Nutt's where he had obviously lost contact in the long climb and had spun in. Our third casualty. We flew over cloud all the way in spite of the weather forecast that it would be clear in the South and on ETA we started down, by then short of fuel. The four flights scattered and went their separate ways. Sandy let down over the Channel and we broke out of cloud very close to the water. We headed back to England and passed right over or maybe through Bournemouth at roof top height. Sandy knew his way around those parts and the four of us ended up at the Royal Naval Air Station (RNAS) Henstridge. Two of the other flights had remained intact but the fourth had scattered all over southern England. Nothing but a few egos was damaged. Nobody got to Lee until later that day. We had a successful air show and then made our way back to Nutt's in pairs. While at Lee all the pilots went up to the CO's home at Battle in Sussex and were entertained by the Lord Mayor of London. We were

on our best behavior and didn't cause too much embarrassment for our leader but did put a hit on the LM's good whiskey.

ADDL's

Beginning in October we had started getting ready for joining Warrior in the spring for deck landing qualification and the transit to Canada. Carrier operations were new to most of us and there was much to do in terms of practicing carrier drills. The circuit, takeoffs and landings, operating on the deck etc. had to be worked on. The deck landing itself was the most demanding, the a/c had to be flown on the approach at or not far above the stalling speed and put on the flight deck in a very small space. In those days before angled decks one had to be very precise or the consequences could be nasty. The Seafire was not a good deck aircraft due to its light weight, narrow and relatively delicate undercarriage, tendency to bounce on touchdown and poor visibility from the cockpit. The main part of that preparation was practicing deck landings, Assisted Dummy Deck Landings (ADDL's) on the airfield under the guidance of the Deck Landing Control Officer. The DLCO's were pilots with a lot of deck experience who had received special training and could get a/c down thru' the means of paddles ("bats") held in each hand and standard signals which were used to tell the pilots where they were in the approach. Barry Hayter was the 803 DLCO. Most of the DLCO's signals were mandatory and a lot of ADDL's were done to ensure that our reaction to those signals was fast and automatic. One had to fly the a/c on the low, curved approach being careful not to stall and keeping the eyes constantly on the bats. We each did at least one session of ADDL's each flying day along with the other flying. We each had to take our turn out on the runway with the batsman as recorders noting the details of each approach for de-briefing of the pilot later. I was doing this one day and Lloyd Nash managed to stall about 100 yds. from touchdown and 50' up, his port wing dropped and he hit the ground at our feet virtually. We jumped clear, swallowed our gum and when the dust settled we checked on Lloyd who was sitting in his cockpit OK although the a/c was badly bent. All he said was, "Shit". I found ADDL's to be lots of fun and thoroughly enjoyed doing them. It was a challenge doing it right and the sensations of flying the a/c virtually with one's finger tips were always good for an adrenalin rush. For me it was a very positive experience and I looked forward to the forthcoming deck landings.

Dublin

We were to get some leave for the '45 Christmas so we pilots organized a trip to Dublin. We found a good hotel where we had a most enjoyable stay and which laid on a fine Xmas dinner for us. The whole thing being a welcome break. Although the war was over we were still wearing our uniforms for the trip and our resemblance to English officers, notwithstanding our "CANADA" flashes worn

proudly on each shoulder led to a few unpleasant incidents. The Irish didn't like the Brits and we had been terribly naive to ignore that.

Kay: You suggested that I might send something for Warrior so here goes. As the sand runs through the tube I have trouble calling up the muse but a few years ago I did write a book about my aviation experiences for my grand children and I thought that the attached extract might be useful . Pat

It's perfect - thank you. I'll bet your book is interesting. K)

A little "Bona-adventure"

FROM John Thompson

+

I occasionally think about took place in the Baltic after, or prior to a visit to Sweden. As some may recall in a previous enlistment I had been a naval photographer and so was called on for the odd flight to specifically take pictures.

An East German gun-boat had been hounding us and was insisting that its sailing spot was between the carrier and the safety ship. Someone in authority decided to hound them back and a "Horse" from HS50 was dispatched to photograph it. (I don't recall who was driving) I grabbed a ten-shot Omega camera and went with them. The flight was only a few yards to target. I did up the "monkey tail" so I wouldn't fall out and sat with my feet on the step while we did a tight 360 degree around the boat, I leaned out and took ten shots, and told the pilot "mission accomplished."

Rush number one: The monkey tail was attached to me but not the aircraft, I'd only been held in by the centrifugal force of the turn. I made my way back to the seat and strapped in.

The chill came later when I viewed the contact-sheet of the pics. Every shot showed the big black hole of the 20mm cannon barrel pointing right back at the camera - the gunner had us in his sights for the 360 circuit and with a magnifier you could actually see his grin.



H04S (Horse)



THE LIFT BELL

We push the cab along the deck
Until we reach the lift well
And there we stop and listen for
The ringing of the Lift Bell.

At last we stop a time to rest
My head is drooping on my chest,
On your feet, I hear the knell
The ringing of the lift Bell.

Before the launch we hauled up eight
We sit around to watch and wait.
At the cat, all is not well,
There goes that bloody lift bell.

Task is o'er they're coming back
To the well now don't be slack.
The Navy's fine, but this is Hell
The ringing of the Lift Bell.

ABAF R. Fralic HMCS BONAVENTURE 1961

ODE TO A NAVAL AIR FITTER

'Tis the legend of the Flying Dutchman -
As a young lad he decided to be
A Naval Airman in HMCS Shearwater,
At "Coward's Cove" by the sea.
He learned of carriers, DDH's and aeroplanes;
tolerated paperwork, BAMEO's and FOD.
Now the last day of his "Enrolment",
We're shipping him home to the sod.
Take one last look at your kit, Boy,
After thirty years, everything's old.
Burn it all but your sea boot stockings,
for the Nova Scotia nights, they are cold.
And, should you dream of old Naval Airmen;
of unification and who was the best,
Laugh at Crabfats and Pongos who tell you -
"A change was as good as the rest".

PO R.A. Fralic, MMM, CD 26 Mar 80

FROM THE CURATOR'S DESK

By Christine Hines

Our summer visit season is upon us, and it has started off with unseasonably good visit numbers so far! We usually don't get in full swing until mid-end July, but this year our SAM visitors are eager to check out the new improvements.

Top most among what's new at SAM must be the recently installed Swordfish interactive display. Long-awaited, this exhibit uses touch-screen technology; using maps, bilingual text, animation and lots of great photos, this display is innovative and attractive. Focusing less on the "who" and heavily on the "how", the exhibit allows the visitor to explore the technical specifications of the aircraft, and its role in aviation heritage, at their own pace.

An added bonus of the exhibit is that it has a reverse side that talks exclusively about the Merchant Aircraft Carriers (MAC ships), which is a poorly understood topic, but crucial to the Swordfish story, especially in terms of the local Swordfish connection. A brilliant 1/144 scale model of a MAC ship, the Empire MacColl, built by Sackville, NS model-maker Wally Moore, is also featured, and well worth a look.

The 21st century is upon us at SAM, and I truly hope you get a chance to take in the museum this summer, and explore the Swordfish interactive. So far, our only complaints about the exhibit are that we should have a similar one for every aircraft in the collection! Special thanks go to the Directorate of History and Heritage, NDHQ, who provided funding under the auspices of the Museum Development Fund, exhibit designer Don Smith, and software engineer Robert Curtin, for making this interactive a reality. It is fitting that this exhibit was installed in the spring of the year we celebrate 70 years since the Swordfish action against the Bismarck. We received enough funding to produce three of these interactive exhibits: one for the Swordfish, one for the Firefly, and the remaining interactive will profile the Stranraer project we have recently started work on.

In closing, I wanted to be sure our SAMF members and "Warrior" readers are thanked properly. The entire community shares in a milestone on 30 September 2011: we will celebrate the final payment on our CFCF loan for the new hangar, now known as Soward Hall! It is an incredible testament to the success of the Foundation's work, and the support of our unique community. We will of course be celebrating the day with a mortgage burning celebration, but for those who are far and away, a most sincere thank you and a hearty Bravo Zulu for your interest in developing the SAM facility, and preserving naval aviation heritage. We are lucky to have you in our corner, and hope you'll think of all we've been able to accomplish with your support, on that day!



"SAM Curator Christine Hines demonstrates the new Fairey Swordfish interactive display."



SAMF PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The summer sun has finally arrived! Let's enjoy these lazy, hazy days while they last.

Very recently the Foundation paid the final payment on the new building loan of \$200,00 over 10 years. This amount was needed to top up the money that was previously collected through memberships, donations and fund raising over previous years. Many thanks to all! The Museum paid a quarter of the loan.

We are still in need of funds to help support a proposed new building that has been mentioned in previous WARRIOR editions. So keep your membership and donations coming in. We are getting fewer in numbers.

Our annual Dinner/Auction was held 11 June at the WO's and Sgt's Mess Shearwater. Although the number attending was smaller, the event was a great success. A good time and good fellowship was enjoyed by all. Thanks to Patti, Kay and helpers \$5500 was realized. Well done girls! Thanks also to those who attended and donated items for the auction.

The next fund raiser will be the annual golf tournament to be held at Granite Springs on 7 Sep. DEFSEC Atlantic is the host led by Colin Stephenson. Chairperson for the event is

Patricia Myatt. Major sponsors include NSBI, Fleetway, IMP and MARKS Warehouse. SAMF volunteers will participate but the level of participation has yet to be decided.

The International Air Show will be held in Summerside, PEI on 27- 28 August. For more info contact Colin Stephenson at nsairshow@gmail.com

The Foundation Annual General Meeting will be held at the Shearwater Museum on Friday 9 September at 0900. All members are encouraged to attend.

Thanks to the membership and members of the Board of Directors for their loyal support.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and early Fall.
Eugene "Buck" Rogers

ARE I YOU, AND ME

from Charles V. Rolfe

Three of my brothers are Pilots, but not me. I was more intrigued by the workings of an aircraft, than flying them.

I joined the RCN at an age of 17 at HMCS UNICORN in Saskatoon, as an Ordinary Seaman Naval Airman Standard(OSNAS) – they wanted to make me a Stoker! – when the Korean War was in full swing in May 1951. Naive me, I thought after going through New Entry Training at HMCS CORNWALLIS, away I would go to fight the good fight with a Naval Air Squadron on an Aircraft Carrier. Never happened!

At HMCS SHEARWATER, I completed the 8 month training course at the School of Naval Aviation Maintenance (called SNAM originally) at the head of my Class of 13, in May 1952, to become an Able Seaman Air Rigger Trade Group 1(ABAR1).

A draft (one wasn't Posted then) to Z2 Maintenance Hangar came through, followed 2 months later by another draft to #1 TAG (Training Air Group) located at "B" Hangar. I remember being allocated as the Rigger of one specific Harvard, rather than working on any aircraft, as was the norm on future Squadrons I served with. Once a week we would move all aircraft out of the Hangar, mix up a Soogee of many cleaning solutions to spread on the deck, then scrub and squeegee it clean for the Commanding Officers Rounds. When our aircraft were flying, we would wait in the Line Shack(in the front corner of the Hangar)adjacent to the CO's lady Secretary room. One day when I, Red Atkins & Skin Coolen were ensconced there, Skin decided that he would make a move on the Secretary, but he was summarily rejected – or should I say dejected!

Between "A" and "B" Hangars there were stored many

USN Navy blue coloured Avengers with ball turrets, waiting to go to Fairey Aviation for conversion to their new TBM-3 configuration. In early 1953 I was moved from Harvards to work on maintenance of TBM Avengers, which was my introduction to the Repair & Inspection Unit, or RIU Section – aka Are I You, of Naval Aviation.

After 3 months I was drafted to VF870 Sea Fury Squadron, then temporarily relocated to Royal Canadian Navy Air Facility Scoudouc(this sign was erected on the entrance road into the old World War Two triangular runway RCAF Air Base from Highway 132, which ran from Moncton into the Town of Shediac, N.B. We were part of the 31st Support Air Group(31 SAG), VS880 Avenger Squadron was the other part, who moved to Scoudouc from Shearwater in early 1953, when the runways were being lengthened there. The majority of the Sea Fury's required time expired engine changes before we all left for Toronto's Malton Airport, to participate by putting on daily airshows at the Canadian National Exhibition in late August. Being part of the RIU Section, and although being an airframe mechanic, I was then utilized in assisting with the engine replacements.

I remember that shortly after the arrival of 31st SAG in Scoudouc, the Squadron's CO, Pappy McLeod lead a surprise "Beat-up" of the RCAF Sabre Jet airport at Chatham, N.B. which was near the Town of Miramichi, just up the line from us. In retaliation, every day at the Noon hour, we experienced an overhead sonic boom from one of their Sabres breaking the sound barrier. Most of my Wingers went to Parlee Beach near Shediac on their time off to get a tan, swim in the warm shallow water and, most importantly to our morale, pick up the multitude of young ladies from Moncton sunning themselves; the ratio of women to men there was 10 to 1 then!! We would go to dance at the Wagonwheel (a barn-like dance hall) by the beach in the evening.

RCNAF Scoudouc was the only place I served at that gave us lobsters as our meal, as this was one of the less costly ways of feeding everyone. Our Supply personnel would use their LPO (Local Purchase Order) authorization to obtain food from the local area's producers, and Lt. Ed "Lash" L'Hereux figured lobsters were part of it. From time to time we would fit drop tanks on the Fury and, upon return to base, would drain the 115/145 Octane fuel into 45 Gal drums before removing the tanks. The drums of fuel were stored out in the nearby bush and, of course, other uses were made of this unused extra gas, that is until we finally obtained a defuelling bowser. We lived in old WW2 "H" buildings, and we noted that the nearby Hangars were full of stored RCAF equipment, in fact one was chock-a-block full to the rafters of NC-5 aircraft starting units.

We departed Scoudouc in mid-August, with all the Squadron's equipment & some personnel aboard RCAF North Star aircraft, for Toronto's Malton Airport, and to put on daily air shows on the waterfront, for the Canadian National Exhibition. Many of us were billeted with private families,

and we worked out of tents located near the private aircraft Hangars section of Malton airport. I recall that we had bus transportation back & forth to work, and that we crossed over raised portions of a dirt 4 lane highway just being built in 1953, which was the start of the present 16 lane 401 Highway. Nearby to our tent site was the A.V. Roe Aircraft Plant, and we could see & hear some weird stuff occurring over there, such as the VZ-9 Avrocar (looked like a flying saucer). This turned out to be one of those "Black Projects", a VTOL experimental turbojet, mostly paid for by the USAF & CIA. It was useful in learning new processes, leading eventually to Hovercraft technical knowledge. This "Flying Saucer" is now in the US Air Force Museum located at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

Upon completion of the CNE Air Show, we flew to our new base of operations, RCAF Summerside, PEI in September of 1953. 31st SAG Squadrons were in the end Hangar furthest North on the line of Hangars, nearest the East end of the longest runway. Having arrived there, most of the 870 Squadron personnel departed on Annual Leave, excepting myself, a couple of other Hands, and one Officer. Before leaving, the RIU Chief, CPO Rennick had directed me to commence a major inspection on one aircraft that was due, and complete all I could do until the crew returned from Leave. One of the inspections called for a torque check of the mainplane attachment bolts to the airframe, located under the fairing between the wing & fuselage. Doing this check, I found the self locking nut on the bolt to be loose, so I left it as is and carried on with all the other inspection requirements, reporting this major problem when the crew returned from Leave. The Squadron Air Engineering Officer(AEO) immediately sent a message off to Shearwater, and all Sea Fury aircraft were grounded until each one was checked for loose wing attachment bolts, of which others were also found to be loose. That Fall, 31st SAG went aboard HMCS MAGNIFICENT for a Fall Cruise, returned to Summerside for a Winter, then in March 1954, VF 870 Squadron returned to Shearwater for conversion to Banshee jets. There are still more stories to tell about our situation in Summerside, but that is for another time.

From this stage of my career with Naval Aviation, both in the RCN and with the newly formed Canadian Armed Forces, I was mainly working on Inspection & Repair of aircraft, although the RIU entity per se on Squadrons was changed to a more centralized evolution. I had various experiences as time went by, such as:

Being in charge of Visiting Flight as a Leading Seaman,

The Petty Officer of the vast Technical Library of the Aviation Supply Depot.

The Petty Officer of Air Headquarters Section of HMCS MAGNIFICENT.

Maintenance Petty Officer of 870, 871, 880, 881 & VC920

Instructor for Trade Groups 1, 2 & 3 personnel and Tracker type aircraft at NAMS

Quality Assurance Representative at 1107 TSD Fairey Aviation, 101 TSD IMP Aerospace, 206 TSD Rolls Royce and

Quality Assurance Manager 204 TSD Bristol Aero Engines, amongst many others.

I consider that my initial times with the Repair & Inspection Units gave me all the necessary knowledge leading to all other positions of responsibility I accrued in my lifetime. So, for all Aviation Technicians – Are I You – yes I are!

RCN P1AT4(Ret) 25 Yrs



Names Please? (Is that you Rolly?)

SPORTS *(Worthy of second read.)*

Throughout the period of Canada's Naval Aviation, team sports and individual athletic participation played a very important role in day-to-day activities at RCNAS and HMCS Shearwater. Base personnel, both Naval and civilian, took part in the various sports that were provided for their enjoyment and physical fitness. In turn, this also provided great entertainment for the fans from the Base and surrounding communities.

Ever so many Naval Air personnel took part in this myriad of sports that were generally organized by the Base Physical Recreation Department. Competitions took place at a variety of levels, with Inter-departmental and Inter-Mess rivalries being extremely active, while Base representation in sports of local, Maritime, National and International levels thrived. All sport and recreation activities were strongly supported by Base Commanders, Squadron/Unit Commanders and supervisor/ staffs, and I cannot emphasize how important this was for those involved. It must also be pointed out, that flying operations and associated military roles always came first. From my perspective over the years as an active sportsman and fan, both athletics and service duties blended well together at Shearwater and in the carriers. thanks to the excellent support I want to point out that Base Commanders, Captains Welland, King and Ryan were exceptionally supportive.

In writing this article, there is nothing that I would like better than to name all those who took part in the various sports, but that would be a monumental task. For instance, the Shearwater Flyers football team alone has a list of nearly five hundred alumni players. However, I am going to list some people/teams whose names come to my mind while writing down something about each sport activity, along with some of the accomplishments that took place during the heyday years of Naval Aviation.

During the twenty plus years that I spent at Shearwater, many venues were used by the various teams and individuals. First and foremost was the old gym on the Base, which is now part of the Shearwater Aviation Museum. This is where basketball, badminton, boxing and wrestling, and floor hockey was really popular. There were many local locations for football, hockey and baseball, and they included Dartmouth Arrows Park, Dartmouth Rink, Halifax Wanderers' Grounds, Dalhousie University's Studley Field, Shirley Street Arena, Halifax Forum Also, Centennial and Stadacona swimming pools, and in later years our own new gym, pool and Flyers' rink.. Of course our representative athletes also competed in their respective sports in numerous other locations throughout the Maritimes, Country and foreign lands. All through those years the fan support at these locations for all sports was great but I must admit that the attendance at the hockey and football games was always exceptional.

Many awards and accomplishments were achieved over the years by teams and individuals,. The senior football teams won seven Nova Scotia and Maritime titles, with the 1957 Canadian Intermediate Championship as their highlight year. Fans will I'm sure remember Mike Milovick, Danny McCowell, Harvey 'Moose' Mills, Wayne Fairbairn, Dale Klassen, Gord Cahill, Bill McKinney, Bruce Walker, Bill Gourley .and Clint Halfkenny to name but a few. Our hockey teams provided great entertainment for the Base. Especially in the Maritime Armed Forces Hockey League in 1957-58 where they advanced to the Canadian Allen Cup playdowns. Players to note were Lou Darche, George Saleski, Les Shatford, Kerry Briard, Stu Mingo, and Dick Beazley.

Baseball and softball teams were very prominent over the years, competing in local and service leagues about the Province. Players of note were Fulton Zwicker, Tom White, Emery Gagnon, Dave Trinder and Dick Dupchuk. Basketball was a big favorite over the years with the likes of Dave Leclair, Ron Heath, Gord Gillies and Ron Caudle who played for the Flyers. Soccer was also a very popular activity at Shearwater. Names that stick out in my mind are Hugh Cutler, Johnny Pike and Al Ardern.

For those who liked to watch sports in the ring, boxing/wrestling bouts in the old gym were well attended by the fans during the 1950s. Sam Johnson and Bob Matchett were boxers of renown and two wrestling 'stars' were Bill (Turk) Knatchbell and Bill (Russian) Melenchuck.

With the new gym came the squash courts and this activity brought many new participants. Two regulars who I always think of are Len Sperling and John Salmond. Another gym sport that was very popular was badminton, with John Eden and Ken Brackley always active. Volleyball was one of the most successful of team sports ever to come to Shearwater. Headlining that sport were Ivor Axford and Doug Dunham, whose participation helped in the winning of numerous local, Provincial and National championships. The bowling alleys at Clarence Park were always very busy, with the likes of Ralph Glass and John Scott on the lanes.

Other successful sports activities that took place during those memorable years at the Base, were curling, track and field, broomball, water polo, swimming, figure skating, and golf. Following lists a few of those people who took part in these activities. Ed Smith, Hugh McLelland, Jim Davidson, Bob Cormier, Nancy Garapick, Tony Reaume and Rod Lyons. One sport that was extremely popular in the carriers was deck hockey. Games between the flight deck ACs and the stokers were always "rock-im-sock-im" events. Hockey, baseball games and golf tourneys were organized when the carriers visited foreign ports. Squadron and air department personnel along with ship's company people participating.

I must say that the success of so many sport activities on the Base and in the carriers would never have happened

without the efforts of the coaches, managers, trainers, equipment managers, water boys and cheerleaders. Consistently, over the years, these volunteers donated their time and individual skills to ensure that their particular sport did well. I know that all those who played and competed, appreciate their contributions.

This has been but a brief history of organized sports that were active during my days at Shearwater.

I would like to have named more of the athletes who participated during that time, but as you readers can appreciate, space is limited. However, all of us I'm sure, have great memories of the times spent either taking part or as a spectator when the cry of 'Go Flyers Go" was ever so prevalent in and around the Base.

Rolly West



Basketball



In 1957, the Royal Canadian Navy's Shearwater Flyers (in white jerseys) defeated the Fort William Redskins to win the Canadian Intermediate Football Championship.

DO YOU REMEMBER SWIMMING AT SHEARWATER?

In the late forties and early fifties there were no facilities for competitive or recreational swimming at Shearwater. At that time MacDonald's Lake was inaccessible and McCormick's Beach in Eastern Passage was too cold even in the summer for all but the bravest swimmers; consequently, members of Shearwater had to go to the Dartmouth Beaches such as the Lions Beach on Lake Banook, to swim for fun and to Stadacona for competitive swimming. This all changed in 1957 when the new gymnasium centre, complete with a 25 meter pool, was opened.

Within weeks of the new pool being opened, a Life Guard Program was initiated. Former Life Guards and Swimming Instructors volunteered and were given refresher courses to bring them up to the standards of the day. In a short time, various courses were established at the different Red Cross Levels. This was followed by instructions in the Royal Life Saving Society for the more advanced swimmers. At the same time a water Polo Team was organized for competition with other military teams in the area.

Many people went through these programs and if you were one of them we would like to hear from you. All the early programs were run by volunteers and we would like to honour them with an article in the Warrior. Rocky Collins started the first evening Adult Beginners Class. Who remembers the input that **Bob Cook** and **Cy Heaton** had on the various programs? What about the Saturday morning dependent swimming classes with Andy **MacLaughlin**, **Frank Reesor** and others? And the noon hour classes for military members put on by **Frank Reesor** and **Tug Wilson**? Let us not forget the Water Polo Teams with **Colin Armson** or the Bluefins Swim Team.

There are many other volunteers, participants and events that were involved. Please forward your thoughts, memories, and photographs of the various swimming programs that took place at Shearwater before 1974 to Kay at the SAMF Office, 1-888-497-7779/ 902-461-0062/ fax. 902-461-1610 or e-mail, samf@samfoundation.ca so that we can cover all the various activities and try to show our appreciation to all those who made the programs work. Thank you for your participation and happy swimming! *Bill Gillespie*



Water Polo



Fred Illingworth

Unveiling of the GMFRC Illingworth Room

It was our honour, during our Annual General Meeting on 25 May 2011, to have Fred Illingworth do an official unveiling of our newly named classroom – now the Illingworth Room. Fred Illingworth was the first Executive Director of our Greenwood MFRC and served in that role from 1986 to 2002.

Thank you Fred from our GMFRC Board of Directors and Staff who have had the pleasure to serve with you or follow in your enormous footsteps!

Celebrating Canada's Naval Aviation Heritage

By General (Ret'd) Paul Manson



Throughout 2010, as part of the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadians from coast to coast were treated to a remarkable sight in our skies: a World War II era Corsair aircraft.

Aptly named "Gray Ghost", it is a meticulously restored version of the aircraft flown by Lieutenant Robert Hampton Gray on the fateful day in August 1945 when he was killed during an attack on an enemy destroyer in Japanese home waters. For his courage in that operation, "Hammy" Gray was awarded the Victoria Cross, the last Canadian to have received that pre-eminent decoration.

Gray Ghost, bedecked in the sea-blue colour of the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm, in which many Canadians served during World War II, was rebuilt for Michael Potter's Vintage Wings of Canada aircraft collection in Gatineau, Quebec, across the river from Ottawa. Throughout 2010, the Corsair flew from location to location across the country, to remind Canadians that naval aviation is still very much a part of what we celebrated in the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Navy.

Often overshadowed by accounts of other RCN operations over the years, the aviation component of the story is nevertheless a fascinating one, and a matter of justifiable pride to all who served in the Senior Service. Although this brilliant chapter in our military history came to an end with the unification of the three Services in 1968, the naval aviation legacy lives on.

It's a tradition whose roots go back to the First World War.

In that conflict, many Canadians joined Britain's Royal Naval Air Service and served with distinction. As the war progressed, the U-boat threat to Allied shipping became so severe that on 5 September, 1918, a Canadian Order-in-Council was issued establishing the Royal Canadian Naval

Air Service. By December of that year, however, the armistice had intervened, and the organization was disbanded.

The interwar period saw little advancement in naval aviation in this country. Worthy of note, however, was the postwar gift to Canada by the United States of HS2L flying boats, which operated out of Eastern Passage, N.S., helping to keep alive the maritime dimension in military flying at a time when air power in general was of scant concern to successive Canadian governments and the general public.

By the end of the Thirties the ominous threat of a new world war stimulated a renewal of interest in military aviation, including naval aviation. Increasingly, it became clear just how much we had fallen behind our potential enemies in this regard. This was manifestly evident following the outbreak of war when, once again, the U-boat menace began to take a terrible toll on Allied shipping, with devastating consequences.

In 1942, the British and Canadian Governments became painfully aware of the urgent requirement for adequate naval air forces to provide air coverage in the mid-Atlantic to combat the U-boat threat. Consequently, in October 1943, the Canadian Cabinet War Committee approved the reformation of the RCNAS. By February 1944, RCN personnel were manning two Royal Navy aircraft carriers, *HMS Nabob* and *HMS Puncher*, with many Canadians serving in Royal Navy air squadrons as aircrew and aircraft technicians. Experience levels of RCN personnel in seaborne air operations continued to grow to the point where in May, 1945, the Canadian Cabinet War Committee established an RCN force plan for the Pacific Theatre that included two Light Fleet Class carriers, two Naval Air Stations and ten Naval Air Squadrons, totaling nearly 2,000 Naval Aviation personnel.

Despite the Japanese surrender in August, 1945, the continuing requirement for a Canadian Naval Air Branch was underscored by the fact that experienced RCN personnel had adapted well to the special requirements of carrier operations and were ready to operate as Canadian units. In December 1945, the Canadian Cabinet approved the post-war permanent RCN Air Branch. Although small, the aviation component of the RCN evolved into a force whose competence was second to none in the Western World in the face of the emerging Soviet threat.

The first RCN carrier, *HMCS Warrior*, was commissioned 24 January 1946. Its two squadrons, 803 (Seafire) and 825 (Firefly), both originally with the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm, became the first official Canadian Naval Air Squadrons. They embarked on *HMCS Warrior* for training, operations and transport to RCAF Station, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, arriving on 31 March 1946. On December 1, 1948, RCAF Station Dartmouth became officially known

as RCN Air Station Dartmouth and was simultaneously commissioned as *HMCS Shearwater*. Thus began the formation of a distinct, totally Canadian, Naval Air Service.

By 1948 *Warrior* was returned to the Royal Navy in exchange for *HMCS Magnificent*. "Maggie" would serve with the RCN until June 1957, during which time she would become the focal point for further advancements in aircraft maintenance and operations in the tough North Atlantic environment.

Naval Air Squadrons, including Air Reserve Units, increased in number as the RCN was expanded to meet Canada's commitments to NATO during the early to mid 1950's, including anti-submarine warfare, combat air patrol, air support of land forces as well as search and rescue operations. Increasingly during this period, the RCN Air Branch worked closely with the United States Navy. Squadrons were outfitted with Grumman Avengers and Hawker Sea Fury fighters. Three small Bell helicopters were brought into service on 1 September 1951, precursors of what was to become a major part of naval aviation in Canada, namely shipborne helicopter operations.

The heyday of Canadian Naval Aviation came with the Commissioning of the carrier *HMCS Bonaventure*, on 17 January 1957. This new carrier, fitted with an angled flight deck, mirror landing sight, the latest steam catapult technology and a carrier approach radar, provided Canada with its first all-weather day-night capability, with Banshee jet fighters and the modern ASW Tracker aircraft operating from its deck. With the retirement of the Banshee fighter in 1962 and the introduction of the Sikorsky Sea King ASW helicopter, "Bonnie" became a dedicated ASW carrier. New Canadian destroyer escorts, which were built or converted to enable the large Sea King helicopters to operate from their decks, added a third dimension to the team which became renowned in the world of ASW. Of particular note during this golden era was the fact that the Navy led the world in the operation of helicopters from small decks and in the development of the "Beartrap" helicopter haul-down system, permitting day/night operations when helicopters from other navies were often deck-bound.

And then came unification, with the Canadian Forces Reorganization Act on 1 February, 1968. The Navy was hit particularly hard by this major and radical restructuring of the Canadian military, and its aviation component was no exception. Within months, *HMCS Bonaventure* was paid off, bringing to an end the relatively short but glorious era of Canadian aircraft carrier operations in support of NATO, NORAD and domestic interests.

Of course, the Navy's hard-won aviation skills were carried through into the new era, under the rubric of "Maritime Aviation", which brought together all naval and light blue sea-related aviation resources into what became the

Canadian Forces Air Command in 1975. It was a radical experiment and a difficult transition, especially for those individuals and units that had served so proudly in the RCN. Because Air Command was *de facto* a reborn air force, former naval persons were in a sense having to transfer their loyalty to another service. It was perhaps in the case of the helicopter detachments aboard destroyers and frigates that this situation called for the most delicate consideration, for it was here that members of the two former services came into particularly close contact, with lots of potential for friction.

Putting Air Force personnel on Navy ships was a test of accommodation on both sides. Greatly, to their credit, they made the new system work. Within a remarkably short period the integration of helicopter detachments aboard ships was functioning well. Aircrew and ground crew personnel, regardless of previous service affiliation, were proud to be part of the ship's crew, and teamwork became the watchword.

Thus ended a truly remarkable era in our nation's military history, and it is well that in the Centennial Year Canadians recognized naval aviation as a proud part of the Royal Canadian Navy's rich legacy to the modern Canadian Forces, and to the nation itself.

When you saw the Gray Ghost Corsair flying by as part of the RCN 100th Anniversary celebration, it is hoped you gave a thought to the members of the Canada's Naval Aviation community who, over the years, served with skill, distinction, dedication and courage. It is a part of our military heritage that needs to be remembered and honoured.

General (Ret'd) Paul Manson was Chief of the Defence Staff from 1986 to 1989. An Air Force fighter pilot, his first military flight was in an RCN Harvard in November, 1952, while a cadet at Canadian Services College Royal Roads.

(The article first appeared in ON TRACK Magazine.



ABAF Hughes - Avenger 'H' Med Cruise

Arrogance Can Be Disastrous

We were flying the Argus out of MacRihanish Scotland in the fall of 1974 on a NATO exercise. We were from CFB Summerside, had a great crew right from the front seats to the ASW department. The skipper was the “right kind of guy” in that he cared not for the politics of the Military, but just for his crew, their families and the Squadron. We had just buried one of our own as a result of a motorcycle accident down the road from the base back in Summerside, so we felt very close to each other and worked as a crew very well.



ARGUS

Bear in mind, this was shortly after my trade (Observer 081, as it was known at that time) had taken over the tasks and positions of the Flying Officer classification from the “light blue” element and the majority of us were “dark blue” with many years of experience in ASW both from flying off the Bonaventure and from shore bases internationally.

This particular night we were boring holes in the sky over the North Sea, a beautiful night, full moon with a fair amount of “Q” about. We had the Squadron CO aboard that flight as a guest for lack of any other word. I was in the nose position when I heard on the I/C the request from our Routine Nav to “over fly HMS Ark Royal” so he could update his system. I responded on I/C “we can’t over fly a carrier, she has a permanent Notam”.

The immediate response from the flight deck (Sqn CO’s voice) was “nose, you keep your eyes open, we’ll do the flying”! Well, that really set me off, but before I can even think I see a Gannet from Ark Royal which I can also see about four miles away, coming from our Stbd to Port at 90 degrees and about fifty feet below. I can still see the pilots face as vividly today as then, and he looked more than a little horrified at this great lumbering four engine bird about to collide with him.

At the same instant over the guard frequency came the order “Unknown aircraft approaching Ark Royal from the N/E, turn about, Ark Royal is recovering aircraft”.

“Nose vacating” I called, crawled out and up to the flight deck where the CO and I went nose to nose about how

close we all came to being a flaming datum due to his arrogance. I was the ranking WO aboard, not that it mattered, I was furious. The FE on the panel right beside us was as white as a ghost, not a word from the two pilots just feet ahead of us. You could have heard a pin drop were it not for the sound of the mighty Pratt and Whitneys.

The CO yells “WO O’Neill, consider yourself on charge”!

“Fine” I yell back, “consider your (expletive) ticket history”, and we parted after he told me we’d continue on the ground. I forget who was on Radios, but I got a great big thumbs up as I passed the station, he had heard everything as well as the Routine Nav directly across the aisle.

After the debrief back at the base I was called in. We went over the entire fiasco and I was told we would re visit it back in Summerside. A few days after returning I got the “invite” to his office, he was all for letting it stay behind us and getting on with operation of the Sqn without ONE word of apology or “you were correct that night”. Nothing!

I knew it was behind us but also knew I could kiss goodbye to much of a career. I had enjoyed and earned fast promotions, gained my CD as a Warrant Officer and had thirteen years service when this all happened. I felt I did my job well and to the best of my ability, looked after my subordinates and respected my superiors. That night over the North Sea I came to realize the “new era” we found ourselves in for the most part did not care a rats ass about our previous accomplishments or (especially) our capabilities as aviators. There were exceptions, some of my Senior Officers were indeed very supportive and recognized the professional manner in which we did our tasks.

On July 23, 1982 while en-route to Keflavik Iceland on board Aurora 140113, I received a message of my promotion to MWO from our Sqn CO who ironically had been a flight Commander back in SU with me. I answered him by calculating the days between promotions and advising they were all irrelevant now. He answered “a most appropriate response”.

Looking back, I would not have changed one reaction to the incident. It cost me dearly, but I know I did the right thing for myself and my crew.

As the title says, Arrogance can be Disastrous and can be in any walk of life. There are fourteen (I believe) of us still alive from the eighteen souls on board that night, “There but for the grace of God”.

CPO (Ret) Charles P. (Chuck) O’Neill

Admiral Falls, Me and those Halcyon Days of New Beginnings

Walter G Henry LCDR RCN (ret'd)

Halcyon Days for me---and there were a few such times, including Admiral Falls, his first ship command, and my learning which way was up when on the bridge. He was a Commander at that time and I had just finished subs courses. We were both posted to HMCS Chaudiere in early '63 and I suppose we both had something to learn.



HMCS Chaudiere

I am not going to use names, apart from myself and Admiral Falls, and I truly hope I do not cause embarrassment to anyone. There are a lot of gaffs in the learning business. Sometimes the real issue is how people handle themselves--- and again I do not wish to cause embarrassment, but this man is not known as 'the gentleman Admiral' for nothing. I was so delighted to see a short article by him in the spring issue of Warrior. In my view he is a prince.

So where to begin. Chaudiere was just coming out of refit and he, and I, indeed the whole ship's company were all drafted aboard within a few days of the ship being handed over from the dockyard to become part of the Canadian contribution to NATO. Before joining the Fifth Squadron of destroyer escorts we, as was the case for all newly refitted ships with new crews, had to be 'worked up.' That meant going to sea under immediate command and control of a work-up staff whose skills and experience would teach men and officers how to work together as a team.

But even before that we had to take on fuel at the Imperoyal jetties on the Dartmouth side. I had understood that Cdr Falls was coming from Bonaventure where he had been Commander Air, and since he was clearly a pilot, I wondered where he had learned how to drive a ship. I had no doubt he knew, but really, even in serving as a ship-borne officer, how often do you get a chance to take the con when you are coming along side? Still on that morning he stood in the port wing with the navigator repeating exactly his orders into the intercom for the helmsman. I, as trainee, was on the forecastle and heard, 'Let go forward. Let go aft. Let go after spring. Slow ahead starboard': the stern swung out as tension came on the forward spring. Stop starboard. Slow astern both

engines'; and the ship backed away from the jetty--- the whole affair just as cool and as sweet as it could be.

Hence across the harbour to Imperoyal. We approached the jetty end, port side to, at about a 20 degree angle to the shipside lay. We might have wished to swing a bit to starboard and stop engines, but what I heard was 'Stop both engines. Slow astern port.' I did a mental gasp for, although we were moving slowly, 2200 tons of ship bearing down on the jetty's concrete abutment, even at 4 or 5 knots, was a bit disconcerting. Our forecastle officer was a reserve lieutenant getting in some summer sea time and his immediate response, however comic, was 'Stand by to fend off forward.' We grabbed a pudding fender and rushed to the bull ring at the bows---my mind doing a sort of 'I can't believe this is happening!!!' Then I heard, ever so calmly and in a perfectly normal voice. 'Stop engine.' 'Full astern both engines.' The ship shuddered a bit, its bow having just begun to move to port, and steadied on its heading. 'Stop both engines.' 'Slow ahead port.' 'Stop port.' Then, in a moment the Buffer shouting from the waist of the ship 'forward lines' and 'fenders to port side.' The rest is no more than comment, but what had just happened was a good a lesson in seamanship and in calmness as any young officer could wish for. I dare say the event was unlikely to have been even noticed except in the port wing, engine room and the forecastle.

Ah but those were the days, The work up team came on board and we headed south. We had other duties however and were attached to Bonaventure as plane guard. Mostly I suppose things went well. But then came that first watch during which a S2F (crew of four) did a wing-over in the warm and gentle, but very dark waters of the Caribbean. The ship moving toward the site, Cdr Falls and the work up captain stood in the starboard wing overlooking the boat deck and watched as we tried to get the cutter lowered. Somehow we managed to get the falls snagged in the blocks and the cutter could not be raised or lowered. The crew's earlier learnings in seamanship seemed to vanish with the occasional flicker of flying fish on the water's surface. There was a lot of shouting and a lot of suggestions as to what to do; I suppose confusion is the right word. Then the order 'Away divers', and they were gone in a minute--- although it would be hard for them to find survivors looking, as they must, from the level of the surface of the water itself. Still the cutter was immovable and so the order 'Away whaler.' Willing but inexperienced hands moved in an instant and the whaler was on her way down with a full crew. Unfortunately the notion that when a ship has way on--- and although we were nearly dead in the water there was still some forward movement,---if the ship has way on the aft Robinson disengaging gear must be released FIRST. And you know what happened. Eagerness released the forward gear first and the bows of the whaler headed for sea bottom, and all hands were in the drink.

Now there were 14 people in the water: Four aircrew, four divers, and six from the whaler. Fortunately the water was warm and all those having lights on their life jackets could be seen bobbing symmetrically up and down. The order 'Cut away the whaler falls' released the boat

and freed the ship to manoeuvre.

Now the order 'Away scrambling net. Starboard side.' This worked. In a few minutes there was again a means of coming on board.

In all of this Cdr Falls, disenfranchised from taking action by the four stripper of the work-up team, had to stand there and watch it all happen. He must have wondered how he would ever survive the 'after incident' report that was sure to go in. But he remained cool. Cool when all around him were losing their heads, he kept his. It is hard not to remember Rudyard Kipling's advice about being a 'man:' '--to maintain [oneself] when all about doubt you, and to take into account their doubting too—' Cdr Falls was, and is still I know, a very cool and professional officer.

By this time the four airmen had been in the water for over forty minutes. We learned later just how exhausted they were. The ship inched its way to where their life jacket lights were bobbing up and down, and slowly they made their way to the ship's side. Three were able to climb the scrambling net. The fourth could not because, as we later learned, his immersion suit had a leak and he was carrying about 400 pounds of water inside the suit. I recall trying to get our first LCDR's attention about giving aid but he was fully engaged. I slipped off my 'good' watch and shoved it into his pocket for safe keeping and went over the side and down to where the airman was struggling at water's surface. I managed to get under him and push him up a bit, but as he came out of the water he lost even more buoyancy, and became immovable. He was finally pulled up from above by many eager and helpful hands.

Once back on board, and hearing that the Bonaventure had ordered us to make haste to rejoin her, I began to wonder if all fourteen swimmers had been recovered. I asked the first LCDR but he did not seem to hear me, and so I asked the Buffer and I think his reply was along the lines of 'As far as I know.' I was not reassured but the work up team staff were already thinking about how best to rejoin Bonaventure. I am glad now that I had such a consuming confidence in the correctness and propriety of command that I really did not doubt that all fourteen had been recovered.

And so it was. Had the consequences of error not been so serious the affair would have been humorous in the extreme, but I assure you no one was laughing as long as those men were in the water.

Throughout it all Cdr Falls was as cool as any man could be. It was a characteristic I grew to expect and, I hope to emulate. He turned the incident to advantage by asking that Chaudiere be replaced as plane guard and that we be given an opportunity to exercise our guns by ridding the sea of the danger to shipping posed by the abandoned whaler. Whatever the Bonaventure staff may have thought, Cdr Falls here turned the event to a learning opportunity for his crew.

Another vignette from a later trip to the Caribbean

found us working with a submarine and other ships of the fifth squadron. Again it gives insight into the humanness of Cdr Falls and his ability to rise to the occasion when others have failed in a moment of decision.

We were heading south to rendezvous with HMCS Restigouche northbound, and then, in her company, to join the remainder of the squadron. Always taking advantage of time to train, the con (and therefore command) during this morning watch was not on the bridge but in the radar plot room. That is to say, helm orders were being given from the radar plot. As Restigouche approached on our port bow we, on the bridge heard the order 'port fifteen'. I was the bridge safety officer and I knew---I really did--- I knew that it was a dangerous order. My reaction was to call radar plot on the Executone and advise them to that affect. The trouble was the Executone could easily be blocked if there was more than one station selected. The result was that radar plot did not hear me. Nor did they hear my several repetitions. I was really becoming concerned. Restigouche was too close on the bow to permit a safe turn to port between our southward course and her northward course. I was sure of it---but!!!! The con was with radar and the captain was in the plot room. As I pondered my dilemma Cdr Falls appeared in the passageway from radar. For reasons I still feel embarrassed over I felt relieved. If he was here on the bridge it must be OK. Right? He walked toward his chair and suddenly, while on the way, I heard 'Stop both engines. Full astern both engines. Starboard 45' The ship began to shudder and rapidly slowed, while the bows that had just begun to turn toward Restigouche, steadied and then returned to a more southerly direction. that

We made an inter-ship signal to Restigouche to 'excuse [our] wobble'. I waited a moment more till she had past us on the port beam and then made a normal turn to port and assumed a station on her beam.

All was well with the world again. Cdr Falls walked toward his seat and, the only time I have ever heard him show exasperation, he said 'God damn it, Walter.' Later, when the radar exercise was over and he was engaged in discussion near his seat on the bridge, I went over to apologize for having failed in my duty as Safety Officer in that, knowing the order to be dangerous, I had not immediately countermanded it. That was my job and I blew it. Cdr Falls was very gracious with me. He explained that when he first came on the bridge he had looked at the compass tape and saw it to be still on south---that is, not moving. He therefore considered that I had in fact countermanded the con order from radar and that all was well. Part way across the bridge he realized we had helm on and immediately took action to correct a plainly dangerous situation.

Near the end of my tour on Chaudiere Cdr Falls recommended me for training at the USN Post Graduate School at Monterey California. We had just come off of exercises with a British submarine in the North Sea and had repeatedly seen green flares pop up on our bows, indicating that we had just been torpedoed. I was determined that there had to be a better way and that the

negative velocity structure of the northern seas was a critical problem to be overcome. The USNPG was the place, if there was one anywhere, to think it through. Of course the answer was already in the works because within a few years thereafter we, and all of NATO, were using towed sonar where the transmitting and receiving head is far enough down so that it is approximately in the same water as the searched-for submarine. Detection ranges are hugely increased.

Cdr Falls became a mentor for me in many ways. Although the graduate training I later received moved me out of things Naval and into the communications and electronics sphere of largely Army and Air Force, his capacity to live with and manage uncertainty, retain an ever-gentleman quality, and commit himself fully to the welfare of his men, the Navy and of the free world were decisive for me.

Well done good Sir, and thank you. A collision at sea can spoil your whole morning.



Dr Leo Pettipas,
Associate Air Force
Historian

Office of Air Force
Heritage and History
1 Canadian Air Division
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Leo Pettipas is a native of Halifax, Nova Scotia. He holds an MA in Anthropology from the University of Manitoba, with a specialty in environmental archaeology. He served as a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at the University for six years, and for 15 years after that he was Chief of Archaeology with Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism. In the latter capacity he established several publication series on Manitoba archaeology, and was heavily involved in the drafting of Manitoba's Heritage Resources Act in the mid-1980s. He has published two books and over 120 articles on archaeology and related subjects. Now retired, his career spanned more than 30 years, making him one of the most senior archaeologists in the province of Manitoba. In 1995 he received the Province's *Prix Manitoba* Award for excellence in Education and Communication, and in 1999 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by Brandon University in recognition of his contribution to the discipline of archaeology in Manitoba. He continues to write for the *Manitoba Archaeological Newsletter* and the *Manitoba Archaeological Journal* as a Life Member of the Manitoba Archaeological Society.

Leo Pettipas is also an avocational historian with a special interest in Canadian Naval Aviation. In his capacity as Honorary Historian with Winnipeg (Sea Fury) Chapter, Canadian Naval Air Group (CNAG), he authored and self-published seven books on the subject. In recognition of his writing efforts on behalf of Naval Air history, he was formally recognized nationally as the CNAG Member of the Year in 1986. He has published over 50 articles on Canadian military aviation in various books, journals, magazines, newspapers and newsletters in Canada and the United States. He was Editor Emeritus of the volume *Certified Serviceable: Swordfish to Sea King* (1994), a major work covering the groundcrews and support units of Canadian Naval Aviation and the post-Unification Maritime Air Group. He has given public lectures on Naval Aviation to a variety of audiences in Winnipeg, and has participated in ground display programmes at the Moose Jaw and Portage air shows. He is a Regular member of the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation, and in 1999 he was appointed an Associate Air Force Historian, Office of Air Force Heritage and History, 1 Canadian Air Division, Winnipeg. In this capacity he was a co-author of the book *402 City of Winnipeg Squadron History: On Guard for 75 Years*, published in 2007, and writes articles for the 402 Squadron publication *Bear Tracks* and the CFB Winnipeg newspaper *Voxair*.

Leo wrote the following books in addition to others - and they are sold in the SAM Gift Shop.

- Canadian Naval Aviation 1945-1968 (1st Edition)
- The Supermarine Seafire in the Royal Canadian Navy
- The Fairey Firefly in the Royal Canadian Navy
- The Grumman Avenger in the Royal Canadian Navy
- Aircraft of the RCN
- The Hawker Sea fury in the Royal Canadian Navy
- Canadian Naval Aviation 1945 - 1968 (2nd Edition)
- Early Aircraft Paint Schemes in the RCN, 1946-1952

"Certified Serviceable" - *Swordfish to Sea King: The Technical Story of Canadian Naval Aviation, by Those Who Made It So.*
(L. Pettipas, Editor Emeritus). CNATH Book Project.

Not bad for a guy who was never in the Military. Ed

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A Canadian and the Bismarck

Ernest Cable, SAM Historian

In 2010, Gaynor Williams published a book, "The Wartime Journals of a Prairie Kid" which is a compendium of many experiences he recorded in his wartime journal. Gaynor Williams was raised in Alberta and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) at the outbreak of the Second World War. He trained at RCAF Stations Trenton ON and Rivers MA where he was awarded his Observer (navigator) wing and promoted to Sergeant. He was immediately transferred overseas to 240 Squadron, a Royal Air Force Coastal Command squadron based in Stranraer, Scotland; ironically the squadron was flying Stranraer flying boats. A few months later the squadron was transferred to Lough Erne, Northern Ireland where crews began conversion to the PBY Catalina flying boat. The following excerpt from the book relates Williams' Catalina experience in the search for the German battleship, *Bismarck*.



Catalina Flying Boat

"I was really angry when my regular crew left for Iceland on a secret mission, with a Squadron Leader, using his influence to take my place, leaving me with a new (crew) captain without much experience. Fortunately, an experienced US Navy pilot, Lt Johnson, was assigned to our plane to teach him how to fly a Catalina. Several US pilots, stationed at Lough Erne, are training our pilots even though the United States is not at war with Germany.

I had only one trip with the new crew when we left for the most exciting patrol I am ever likely to experience. Our aircraft M/240, along with Z/209, a Catalina from 209 Squadron was ordered to search for the *Bismarck* loose in the Atlantic.

The supposedly unsinkable German battleship had left May 18th on her maiden voyage to attack convoys supplying Britain. She sailed along the coast of Norway, around Iceland where, in a brief battle she sank the *Hood*, Britain's largest battleship. Then she and the cruiser *Prinz Eugen* disappeared into the stormy, cloud covered Atlantic. Was she headed back to Norway, to Brest France, or farther south to destroy convoys?

We took off at 0410 GMT to fly our assigned

search area about 700 miles south west of Ireland. I took drifts from the front hatch, estimated the wind driving the angry seas, and plotted our course on the Admiralty chart for the six hours it took to reach our destination. Then we started a crossover patrol, designed to spot any ship sailing through our search area, with ten pairs of eyes straining, straining, searching, searching an empty wave-tossed sea.

I had just given the pilot a change of course when we intercepted a dramatic signal from Z/209. "ONE ENEMY BATTLESHIP. Course 150°. Lat 49 33N, Long 21 47W. Time 1030 GMT."

We altered course immediately to help shadow the ship we knew must be the *Bismarck*. The weather worsened as we flew south. Gale force winds drove huge waves with long streaks of foam streaming from their tops. "A SHIP ON THE PORT SIDE!" an excited voice yelled from the back blister.

I looked out my navigation window to see a grey shape ploughing through the rough seas at great speed, leaving a long streak of white wake behind like a motorboat in a race. Two more speeding grey shapes appeared. We circled them cautiously. A powerful lamp flashed from the lead ship: "Have you seen enemy battleship?" We knew then they were British destroyers.

I scribbled a note for the captain. "I think we should change course in the direction they are headed", reasoning that they must be speeding to the reported position of the *Bismarck*. Without hesitation he changed course, flying about 1500 feet, just below the ragged edges of the dark rain clouds.

Visibility became much worse, less than a mile in heavy rain. After about 20 minutes flying the pilot motioned for me to come forward. "We should have kept flying south", he shouted above the roar of the engines. "Give me a new course." I had just started to calculate a new heading when I heard a shout from the rear of the Catalina: "THE BISMARCK! THE BISMARCK!"

Pandemonium broke out. The second pilot slapped me on the back as if I had just scored the winning goal in a hockey game. We both stumbled down the narrow gangway to the rear of the plane. There, just a short half mile away I saw the massive shape of the battleship, with the unmistakable yacht-like bow of the *Bismarck*. I looked at the ship come alive with red flashes, the air around us filled with dozens of black puffs of exploding shells.

The rear gunner, his face red with fright, crouched down low in the blister as if the metal hull of the flying boat would protect him. I fell on top of him as the plane surged forward with wide-open throttles. As soon as the protective whiteness of the cloud surrounded us I scrambled back to my navigation desk to see that Johnson had taken over the controls from the second pilot's seat.

For the next hour or so we kept flying in and out of cloud trying to keep the massive shape of the *Bismarck* in sight yet keeping out of range of her guns. Around noon Z/209 suddenly appeared beside us between breaks in the cloud. We flew in formation for a few minutes signalling back and forth. After their first dramatic sighting of the German battleship they weren't able to find the ship again. After contacting us Z/209 returned to base with a hull badly holed by anti-aircraft fire.

Soon after they left we found the *Bismarck* again and continued to shadow her, dodging in and out of cloud trying to keep out of range of her guns. We kept radioing her position back to Coastal Command who passed the information on to the British warships speeding to intercept *Bismarck* before she reached the safety of long-range German aircraft operating out of occupied France.

"Enemy aircraft on the starboard bow!" someone shouted. I rushed to the back blisters grabbed a machine gun and lined the sights on a single-engine aircraft about 1,000 yards away. I kept the gun trained on it until it disappeared in cloud. I thought it was a floatplane; the rigger thought it was a landplane. We both saw a German cross on the fuselage.

A short time later we suddenly realized that we were shadowing a warship with a smaller wake than the *Bismarck*. Was it the German cruiser *Prinz Eugen*? Huge waves buried her bow. Rainsqualls obscured the ship. We strained our eyes trying to identify it.

A powerful lamp flashed from the ship. VE...VE...VE...the opening signal we used for messages sent by aldis lamp. The second pilot held our lamp ready to challenge her with the signal of the day. Suddenly the Catalina rocked with exploding shells. I sat at my navigation desk waiting to be hit like a kid waiting to be hit in the head by a snowball. I didn't worry about being hit in the head or the heart I kept thinking how awful it would be to have a bullet sail up my ass; if I had a steel helmet I would have sat on it. The sound of exploding shells stopped as abruptly as it started. We had reached the safety of the cloud. No one was hurt. The engines of the Catalina kept on roaring. It was miracle that we escaped without damage. We weren't sure what happened. We think the smaller ship, the German *Prinz Eugen*, had lured us within range of the *Bismarck's* guns.

Reluctantly, the pilot asked me to give him a course back to base. Damage to a petrol tank from exploding shells was still a possibility. We had been in the air for over 15 hours with at least five hours of flying ahead of us. A loss of petrol might mean an emergency landing in a raging sea. I put that terrible out of my head. Instead I worried that my navigation might be in error after so many hours of erratic flying dodging in and out of cloud. Fortunately, the engines kept humming without missing a beat, my navigation proved to be reasonably accurate so that just after midnight Johnson set the Catalina down gently along side the red flares floating in the middle of Lough Erne. After we anchored the rigger searched in vain

for bullet holes in the hull, he still doesn't believe we escaped without a scratch.

We returned in triumph to the Operations Room in Castle Archdale where, 24 hours earlier, we had been briefed for our mission. After briefing I walked down to the camouflaged Nissen huts under the trees to drop, dead tired on to my bunk. After a long dead-to-the-world sleep I awoke to the great news that the *Bismarck* had been sunk."

Author's Notes;

Until Williams was convinced to publish his book the fact that a Canadian was involved in the search for the *Bismarck* was mostly unknown and certainly not acknowledged in our history.

At the time Williams made the above entries in his wartime journal over 70 years ago there were several unanswered questions such as: what was the ship that attempted to signal his Catalina then opened fire, where did unknown aircraft from, and where was the *Prinz Eugen*? In the next edition of the *Warrior* these and other questions will be explained.

(More on 'Disabling of the *Bismarck*' in our next edition. Ed)



SE Tech - Beryl Bateman

READERS COMMENTS



Names Please -Radar Plotter Crew HS 50 Sqn for H04S Sonar

From **JOHN EDEN** (in part): You will find (above) a photo taken outside HS50 Hangar in 1954. I was posted to HS50 from VF871 in June of 1954. It is a photo of the original Radar Plotter (RP) crew who flew in the back of the H04S3 helicopters and manned the sonar set. I can only remember the name of the head honcho - Chief Jamieson who is in the middle of the front row.

You may like to use it for one of those "Do you know the name of" items in WARRIOR. It would be interest to see just how many of our Naval Air comrades even remember that the RP Branch manned the dunking sonar in the "Horse" for the first few years.

As usual I read the WARRIOR from front to back within a couple of hours of receiving it and find the articles and comments as intriguing and nostalgic as usual. Many fond memories are stirred by the personal stories and recollections that are sent in by the few members who are still surviving and have the mental acumen to remember details and to write an interesting story.....no disrespect intended.

ROSS MCBAIN drops us a short note: There are not many around from 803 Spitfire Squadron, but Bob Falls and Bill Rikley are two I flew with.

Keep up the good work.

Mike Patterson writes from Spain: There is an old Spanish legend that says - if one is to find the riches of the Indies, one must take some with one. I thought of that when another copy of the SAM Foundation magazine WARRIOR arrived rich in memories.

In the meantime, I hope I get some response to this question.

I have never understood why the RCN had British postwar fighter aircraft, in preference to the well-proven against the Japanese - Hellcat and Corsair. The Sea Fury had a pilot-threatening engine fault - over speeding. The Seafire lacked an undercarriage suitable for deck landing. Based on USN experience in carrier operations with the Wildcat the Grumman engineers designed the larger, more powerful Hellcat, that became a real Zero zapper, along with the Corsair by Vaught Sikorsky, I think. Throughout

1944 as an AEO in Cochin southern India, I was in charge of the assembly, inspections and ground testing of around 200 of the above American-built aircraft. My messmates, the Test Pilots had nothing but praise for these aircraft. But, under the tropical conditions, I experienced some problems when assembling the Seafire.

Of course, the exception - Grumman Avenger (for Pearl Harbour?) Which we wisely and cheaply acquired under the Mutual Defence Assistance Program, during the early '50s, when I was in Washington DC for liaison with the USN Bureau of Aeronautics.

Who in Ottawa was responsible for the decision to buy, not only more expensive, but less suitable English aircraft? By 1950 hundreds of brand new Wildcats and Corsairs would have been surplus to USN requirements and we could have had them under MDAP cheaply. I know defence contracts in Canada can be wasteful, but often that is good for industry and political. But England?

The primary RCN Naval Air mission back in those days, it would seem to me, to have been pilot training ashore and at sea. But I was just a nuts and bolts plumber, so I hope to read some pro and con on this question in a future issue.

PS VAdm Ralph Hennessy's view that we owe a tremendous debt to the real unsung heroes of the Battle of the Atlantic, the men of the Merchant Marines. We do. An RN shipmate once told me that he had been on the rounddown of the carrier off Norway, when a German torpedo bomber skimmed just over the waves below to sink an oil tank in the centre of the convoy. The sight of that ship blowing up and the thought of all those Merchant Seamen, has haunted him ever since. In Ottawa, I don't think that we members of the Naval Officer's Association did enough to urge the Government to make them vets.

Best regards and thanks for your good work. **Mike**
(Always a pleasure hearing from you, Sir. Kay)

A note passed to us from **HUGH SPROULE**: I have just returned to Nova Scotia after 15 years in BC, where after six years I retired as Senior Coach of the Port Alberni TSUNAMI Swim Club. I was surfing the Swim NS website and came across the Shearwater Bluefin website - I am so pleased to see that a swim team is still in place after all these years. When the pool opened in 1957, I was a young Petty Officer Physical Training Instructor. I was appointed the first new pool supervisor. I went on to establish a swim club comprised solely of naval personnel. The Naval team name was the same as that of the football, hockey, soccer, basketball and volleyball teams - The Shearwater Flyers. When I left Shearwater in 1958 the swim team disbanded. Although many of us wanted to start teams for the naval dependents children, it wasn't

part of our mandate and it was forbidden. In early 1959 under the leadership of Petty Officer Peter Britton (an interested parent of a swimmer), and the support of the Base Commander Capt(N) Joe Paul (also the parent of a swimmer), the help of a Naval PTI was obtained and the Shearwater bluefin Swim Club was born.

From 1959 until the late 60's the Shearwater girls dominated meets throughout the Maritimes. At that time I had left the Navy and was coaching the Halifax YMCA Neptune Swim Club (we had the strongest guys). In 1962 or 61 a NS Swim team comprised mainly of Bluefin girls and Neptune guys were selected to represent NS at Eastern Canadian Team trials in Montreal. Hope you don't mind me passing this on - I like to keep the history going.

Here are four names of Bluefin ladies that helped them dominate the swim scene at that - Beverly Britton and her sister (name forgotten), Ann-Marie McCarthy, Patsy and Gillian Paul - there were others of course but time has erased their names from my memory.

Old.coach34@gmail.com



BRUCE THOMAS writes: After reading the comments of Clint Halfkenny and Butch Carmichael on what has happened to Shearwater Flyers football players after retiring, I thought I'd reply. I played 4 years for the Flyers ending in 1957 with the privilege of winning a Canadian Championship. Those years will be treasured forever.

I have met up with those teammates at Hall of Fame Induction, CNAG reunions, and the 50th Anniversary CNAG Reunion of the Commissioning of the Bonnie and the Shearwater flyer Champions of 1957.

In 2007, I applied to the Canadian Football Hall of Fame for recognition of the 1957 Shearwater Flyers achievements. The Curator told me that they would love to have any football records from NS and it would be in their new addition to the Hall in June 2008. I got a call that it was done and I was really pleased with the display. The glass case also has a video of a Navy team playing an American team in London during WW2.

I retired in 1958 and worked at Stelco for 37 years. I coached football for Burlington Minor Football Assoc. For 12 years and had the job of coaching "JIM CARREY" on my team for two years. O yeah, he would make faces and growl at the opposing linemen.

I would love to hear more stories from any of the players that played Football and what they are doing now. For all you "jocks", I guess you're play Golf and trying to break a 100 and playing the armchair quarterback in the off-season. "Go Cats Go".

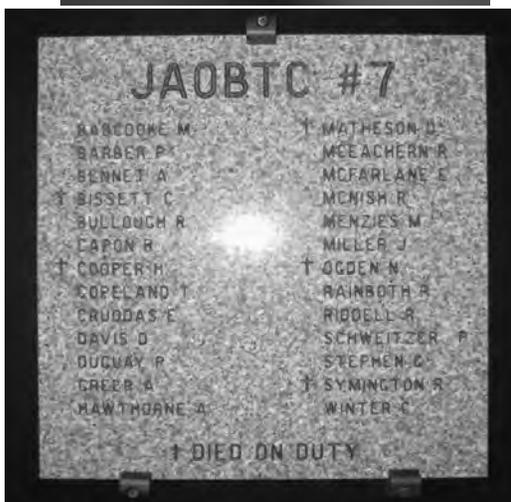


L-R Frank Dowdall and Gerry Brushett

The ladies who work in the SAM, the ones who volunteer there and I wish to thank Gerry for the candy and fruit he brings us every Wednesday. Makes us feel very special. Thank you Gerry

JAOBTC UPDATE

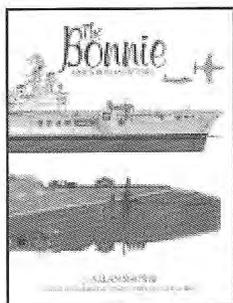
The tile for Junior Aviation Officers Basic Training Course No. 1 is now mounted on the Wall of Honour at the Shearwater Aviation Museum thanks to Whitey Williamson, the sole survivor of his 8 man course, who covered the cost. Also No. 7 JAOBTC tile is now displayed on the wall thanks to a member of the 26 member course who covered the cost and wishes to remain anonymous. Research continues on the membership of course numbers 4, 5, and 8. If you are able to help please contact Kay Collacutt at toll free 1-888-497-7779 or email samf@samfoundation.ca



Names please (I recognize three of them. Ed)

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WALL OF HONOUR

Guidelines for designing your "Wall of Honour" Tile.

The tile used is made from high quality marble which is 12 inches square. The tile can be sand blasted in various ways to suit your wishes. All lettering will be in upper case and the tile will be mounted in the diamond orientation as opposed to a square orientation. All Text will run horizontally across the tile.

The options are:

- Option A:** One half tile 12" X 12" x 17" and triangular in shape with up to 5 rows of 3/4" letters for a maximum of 60 letters and spaces. The longest row can accommodate up to 20 letters and spaces. The remaining 4 rows will decrease in length as the border/edge of the tile dictates. It should be noted that the upper half of the tile will start with a short row and the bottom half will start with a long row.

- Option B:** The full tile with up to 6 rows of 1" letters for a maximum of 55 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate up to 16 letters and spaces. The remaining rows will decrease as the edge of the tile dictates.

- Option C:** The full tile with up to 10 rows of 3/4" letters for a maximum of 120 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate 20 letters and spaces. The remaining rows will decrease as the edge of the tile dictates.

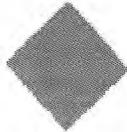
- Option D:** The "Buddy" Tile - sold only as a full tile. This tile is divided into 4 quarters - each 6" X 6". Each quarter can accommodate up to 6 rows of 1/2" letters for a maximum of 48 letters and spaces. The two centre rows can accommodate up to 12 letters and spaces with the remaining rows decreasing as the tile edge dictates.

Option A



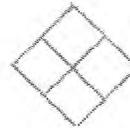
\$300

Option B & C



\$600

Option D



\$600

Wall Tiles may be purchased through monthly installments.

Half Tiles - \$100 day of purchase - \$100 per month for the following two months.

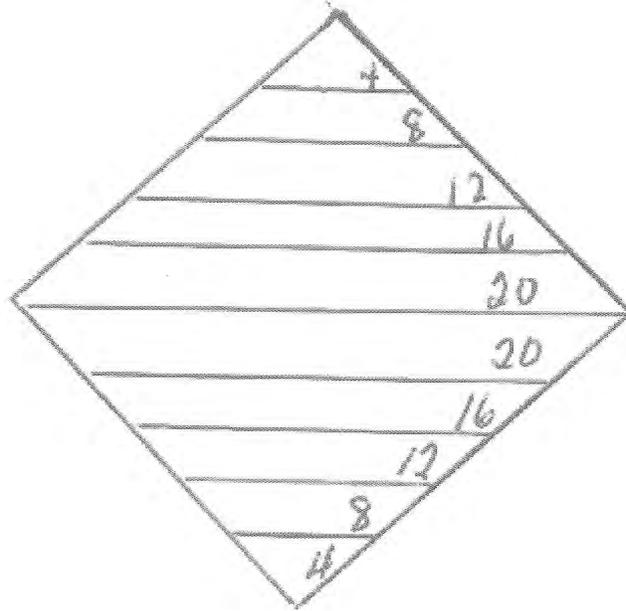
Full Tiles - \$200 day of purchase - \$ 100 per month for the following four months

(Wall Tiles (continued))

ENGRAVING REQUEST

The colour of the tile will be 'Belmont Rose'. If the submission requires any alteration, the subscriber will be contacted by phone or email by the coordinator for further discussion.

REMEMBER TO COUNT THE SPACES!



From: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROV: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

TYPICAL OPTION 'C' above

CIRCLE CHOICE: OPTION 'A' OPTION 'B' OPTION 'C' OPTION 'D'
REQUEST

Please check engraving details for accuracy before sending. We cannot be responsible for misspelled words on your order form.

Method of Payment: Cheque (made payable to SAMF or SAM Foundation) Money Order Cash

VISA/MASTERCARD Card # _____ Exp.Date: _____

For further information, please call the SAMF Secretary: Toll Free: 1-888-497-7779 of (902) 461-0062
Fax (902) 461-1610 Email: samf@ns.sympatico.ca

CODICIL TO CURRENT WILL

Codicil to the Last Will and Testament of _____

which Last Will and Testament is dated this ____ Day of _____ 20 ____.

I hereby add to that said Will as follows:

I give, devise and bequeath to the Shearwater Aviation Museum Foundation,

the sum of \$ _____ to be paid out of my general estate.

Signed and dated this ____ Day of _____ 20 ____

In the City of _____ Province of _____ Postal Code _____

Signature of Testator

Witness: _____

Address: _____

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MEMORIES OF A BACK SEAT NAVAL AVIATOR

By Peter Bruner

PART 6

As the Bonaventure cast off and set sail into the "Med" for more exercises, a lot of us reflected on our visit to Naples and Rome etc... Good memories and good times.

Once again back at sea and tending to the job at hand. Hands to flying stations with the normal landings and take offs, catapult launches and arrested landings went well the first day but on the second, the arrester gear seized up and would not allow the Trackers to come to a gentle stop. Instead, it was a sudden violent stop with the tailhook almost torn from the aircraft. All flying with arrested landing ceased and we set sail for "Toulon", France, for repairs. Once in "Toulon", repairs were being conducted on the ship's arrester gear and most of the ships company went ashore.

Unfortunately I was duty PO and did not get to go ashore. Sitting on the brow watching the liberty men coming aboard convinced me that probably I was one of the fortunate ones NOT to experience shore leave in "Toulon". "Nuff" said about "French Hospitality".

Late the next day, we sailed for Gibraltar. It was a non-stop trip through the straights, through the Bay of Biscay and North to Portsmouth for further repairs and shore leave.

The first day in Portsmouth I had the privilege of going aboard and touring Nelson's flagship, "The Victory". I was totally impressed to walk the decks of this famous ship. Later that day, I caught the train to London and spent the rest of the day touring the London British Museum also all of the next day. That evening I went to Piccadilly to attend the famous "Windmill Theatre". It was everything that I had been told of it.

The next morning I caught the train to visit my sister who lived in "Orpington". I spent that evening with her and her husband, an RAF veteran who became disabled in Canada and they moved to Great Britain as veterans were not cared for or pensionable except in Britain.

The next morning it was back to London to tour around Trafalgar Square, Big Ben's clock tower, Buckingham palace, the Houses of Parliament etc...

That evening a train ride to Portsmouth and thus ended my 4 day sojourn unaccompanied in England. The next day we sailed for Halifax and exercised with the fleet. In mid December we were back again in Halifax for Xmas 1958 and bringing in the New Year.

From Feb to May flying as instructor at the Observer School and then on course for Trade Group 4 as an "Observer's Mate".

In Sept posted to 880 Squadron and crewed up with Mike Langman, Bill Moffat and Dick (Torchy) Pepper.

It was nice to be back on VS 880 in an operational role and flew 36 hours in the month of October 1958. The only thing that sticks in my mind was a flight to Toronto and return. Over Eastern Quebec we encountered a heavy thunderstorm with extreme icing which caused the H/F antenna to be torn off the aircraft. When we landed at Shearwater we were advised by the tower we had a rope being dragged by the aircraft. It was the HF antenna still attached to the aircraft by one end.

May 1960 was one of the most intensive months of exercising with our fleet. Our crew flew 48.5 hours in a 6 day period. Says a lot for the maintainers (Greasy Rag Merchants) and the CS2F aircraft. "Bravo Zulu" to them.

In June the Russian trawler fleet appeared on "Georges Bank". It consisted of over 200 trawlers and about 6 factory ships. "Georges Bank" is a large elevated area of the sea floor which separates the Gulf of Maine from the Atlantic Ocean and is situated roughly between Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Cape Sable Island, Nova Scotia. Anyway, around 20 trawlers had formed up abreast to each other covering approximately 20 miles. They swept down the Nova Scotia coast with about 20 miles separating each set of 20 ships. All were trawling with their nets and cleared everything that entered their nets to the factory ships. VS 880 aircraft were engaged in shadowing these ships and observing their activities on a 24 hour basis. We approached them from astern but as we approached they would fire flares aloft and notify the next column of ships about our approach. The flares were not so bad but they also streamed balloons aloft on cables approximately 300 feet up in the air. Initially we were approaching them at about 150 feet but that changed to a much safer altitude. All of the trawlers were equipped with a multitude of electronic antennae and radars. It boiled down to both factions spying on each other. At the end of June the trawlers proceeded farther East to sea and eventually back North to Russia.

On August 15, 1960 one of our CS2FS disappeared on a night training flight South of Halifax at sea. On the 16 August the Squadron launched aircraft on search missions assisted by search vessels to find the missing aircraft. In late afternoon we located the wreckage and directed the ships to the location. They recovered two crew members alive but Lt. Veronneau, "pilot" and Able Seaman Taylor, "crewman" were killed in the night flying accident.

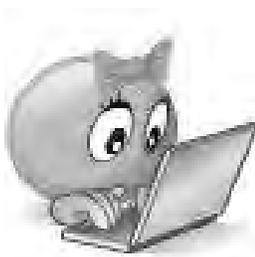
In October flew to Bermuda for eight days of exercises with one of our subs. For a total of 8 days, we enjoyed the island hospitality before returning to Shearwater. En route,

we encountered giant thunderstorms indicative of the Halifax weather. For the next month of November 1960, we engaged in more intensive flying exercises. Our crew alone chalked up 64 hours of which 16.7 were night. December and Christmas was upon us, so annual leave was taken and the festive season was a time for joy and cheer. Thus ended 1960.

In January 1961 we commenced lots of fleet exercises but that's another tale.

To be continued... Yours Aye, "Peaches"

(Always great! Ed)



From the Scy/Editor

Hi everyone:

- The **50/50 Draw** tickets are off to a good start - don't forget to get yours in.

Some folks want to pay for their tickets with a credit card number over the phone or by email and we would fill out tickets for them. This is certainly ok with us.

It was thought that if you didn't want to get involved in the draw you would simply either return the tickets or destroy them. To those who got into the spirit of the Draw, we wish you luck!

- On a most important note - SAMF has paid off our share of the new hangar (old hangar ?). After being told, at that time, that SAMF would not be able to handle the financial responsibility of a new hangar, it was like waving a red flag in your face. We went out to you for assistance in this venture and wow - you came through in spades. *If it wasn't for you - the hangar would not be here - believe me!!!!* However this is not the end of our need for your help.

We were advised that the Museum again requires more space. They are not sure just what will be approved for them, as yet. We are not getting any younger but I feel certain we will all do our best to help out financially while we are still able to. Personally, I truly believe that without you, it won't be able to be done - no matter what the size of the 'space'. So, while we can, let's get started now and donate, what we can. Remembering SAMF in your Will would be great too! (See codicil attached in centre pages.)

Wing Personnel involvement with the Museum is still the same - they come here for Medal's Parades, tea with the

Wing Commander and such things. There are still the same three members on the Wing (complement of 1200) that are SAMF supporters and therefore Museum supporters. (And that's the story of personal support from the 'younger guys'.) Of course we are told (often) that when the Sea King is brought into the Museum, we can expect a huge influx of support. (From whom? The guys on the Wing today? We'll see. They are too young to be interested in this Museum with or without a Sea King.)

The following is a good rule of thumb if you want to send mail to the Foundation. (*Never mind if the return address on the envelop reads Shearwater Aviation Museum add an 'F' after the word Museum.*) or mail to: SAMF (or SAM Foundation) PO Box 5000 Stn Main, Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

How about an article or two regarding your experiences when you were a member of Shearwater. (They can be good or bad experiences - it's up to you.)

BTW we added more photos as requested. They will be added here and there as fillers. We'll need your help for names though.

Must run. Take care and keep well. You are thought of often. Kay



The DVD shown above is a collection of photo-graphs submitted by members of the Naval Air Community and from the Shearwater Aviation Museum (SAM) collection. This slide show was first presented at the CNAG Reunion 2010 by Ron Beard. Cost of the DVD is \$19.95 includes shipping and handling. All proceeds to the SAM Foundation. Call, email or write to order: 1-888-497-7779, local 461-0062, email us at samf@samfoundation.ca or write:

SAM Foundation
PO Box 5000 Stn Main
Shearwater, NS B0J 3A0

CASEX from BONAVENTURE

Les Rosenthal

9 Oct. 1958:-

Late night flight from BV on a "CASEX" (whatever that was) ASW trip looking for subs, under control of the USS John Paul Jones, a big brand-new frigate or DD Leader, first of its class, Hull No. 1. We had 2 a/c, mine was 1512, with Webster driving the other one. Gord Mowat was my co-pilot but unfortunately I don't remember who my OMs were and the names aren't in my log book.

We worked with the ship about 4 to 4.5 hours with no contacts, in filthy weather, bumpy, low ceiling and vis, rain and sea-spray on the windscreen, flying around below cloud between 200 and 300 feet or less looking for MAD contacts. Really miserable flight conditions for low-level MAD work. (But kind of fun, in a way.) We were finally relieved by two other 881 a/c, around 1:00AM or 2:AM and flew back to BV, with Webster flying ahead of me. We each made 2 unsuccessful passes, either "bolters" or wave-offs, I don't remember - all visual, no CCA. It was raining heavily and bumpy and the ship was dancing around quite a bit. On the third pass Webster got a wire OK and I came behind him thinking "if he could, I could!!" and determined to get the darned a/c on deck. My pass seemed OK (to me!) and I thought I'd get a decent wire but, at the last second I was afraid I might be a little high so, contrary to SOP, I forced the a/c down and breathed a sigh of relief when I felt the wire catch and the a/c slow down. But only momentarily ---we heard a loud THUNK and the a/c continued to roll and I realized that we were not trapped. The speed was so low that I considered stopping with the brakes but, seeing the pools of water on the deck, I decided we'd probably skid into something and create a major flight deck disaster. So, without much hope of getting off at such a low speed, I put on full throttle and asked Gord to keep his hand on the gear lever so that he could raise the gear as soon as the weight came off the wheels (which occurred when we went off, or fell off, the end of the angle deck).

At that time we were so slow I didn't really think we could stay off the water. I was trying to hold it up, right on the edge of the stall, IAS not much, if any, over 60K and the stick shaker shaking like mad. Bob Falls, who was LT CDR "F", was in Flyco and later said that our lights disappeared from sight under the angle, thought we'd gone in, and was, surprised to see us slowly re-appear. I wouldn't be surprised if our gear actually touched the water and was probably retracting at the same rate as our initial sink-rate before we started to climb away. We slowly pulled up from the water, hanging on the stick-shaker, then climbed to circuit height and called the ship, reporting the loud noise we'd heard when we caught a wire. A little later

we were told that our hook had been found up towards the bow and that the wire we'd engaged had broken. I forget which number wire it was but, apparently it had broken, torn off our hook and sent it flying up the deck.

The next day, Johnnie Franks, the flight deck E.O., or something, told me the wire and related gear had been OK but that I had somehow caused it to break by landing sideways or something, which is pretty hard to do without hitting the island or going over the side. I really don't know what happened. The only thing I know for sure is that the wire broke, the starboard side of the wire wrapped around our hook, broke it off laterally and hurled it up the deck. I suppose excess speed could break the wire but imagine too high a speed would maybe pull the hook off before it could break a wire.

We flew around awaiting instructions -- We were out of range of any alternates, so we had to get aboard, bail out or ditch. Sea and vis conditions were such that there would be little chance of being spotted and rescued if we bailed out and even less chance of successfully ditching in those sea conditions, especially at night.

We were eventually advised to continue orbiting while they rigged the barrier and then bring us aboard. I think it was supposed to take a couple of minutes, maybe 4 or 5, but they actually took around 45. It turned out that it had been improperly stowed, inside out or something and there was a lot of panic and confusion -- panic in the cockpit and confusion on the flight deck! By this time we had been airborne for about five hours or so and fuel was getting real low. They finally called us aboard and asked if we wanted a CCA approach and we sure did, although I was a little leery of getting too far from the carrier with our low fuel state. In any event, radar picked us up and directed around the area until CCA picked us up and talked me down to my second night DL of that flight, only on this one we stayed on deck. The barrier stopped us as advertized, with no damage, right at the end of the angled deck. I should note that, just as we picked up the "ball" on final, our fuel warning lights came on.

After that I think they decided to do all night recoveries via CCA.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: The above incident occurred just over 50 years ago and may be just the imaginary result of a rapidly failing memory, a vivid imagination and wishful thinking.

In any event---IT WASN'T MY FAULT (was it??") Or, as the LSO always said:- "He was alright when he went by ME!". *Cheers Les*

Castle Archdale

In the Church Of Ireland in Irvinestown, Northern Ireland the 423 Squadron crest is hung in tribute. Alongside are squadron insignia from other Royal Canadian, Royal Australian and Royal New Zealand Air Forces who called the region home during the Second World War. The 'Donegal Corridor,' located along Lough Erne and the Donegal Coast was a pivotal location during the Battle of the Atlantic and the airmen stationed there helped turn the tide on the war. The founding members of 423 hunted Nazi submarines from their Sunderland Flying Boats. They flew in fog and night, and in the wind and storms of the North Atlantic to protect the convoys that were supporting Allied efforts in the European theatre. At the end of the war 423 and their sister squadron 422 would log over 44 000 hours and sink or damage eleven submarines. It would cost fifteen aircraft and 101 crew. It has been sixty-six years since Castle Archdale was the home base of 423 Squadron. Although much has changed in the world, there are still young men and women who fly over the oceans to protect those in need. In March 2011, members of HMCS St John's Helicopter Detachment from 423 Squadron visited Irvinestown and Castle Archdale to pay their respects and honor their common history.

Local historians Ms Breege McCusker and Mr. Joe O'Loughlin guided them through the sites. They walked the grounds of the former base and toured the shoreline where the Sunderlands were launched, recovered and maintained. They traveled to Irvinestown and had lunch at Mahone's Hotel, a favorite 423 restaurant both then and now.

Coastal Command's efforts during the war have never fully been appreciated and yet had they failed, the world would have been a very different place today. In the cemetery at the Church of Ireland in Irvinestown lay some of Canada's best. They were young men who served their country far from home. Flying over foreign oceans, hunting and protecting. They were the founding members of 423 Squadron and their tradition continues. QUAERIMUS ET PETIMUS

Written by Capt Chris Bowers, the article chronicles the recent visit by the HMCS St. John's HELAIRDET (from 423 (MH) Sqn) to Castle Archdale, Northern Ireland. Castle Archdale was 423's WW II home and it was a great experience for the young and current members of the Sqn to visit a piece of our history.



IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

**Clarification
OUR NEW FUND-RAISER FOR THE WARRIOR -
THE 50/50 DRAW**

Our 50/50 Draw is up and running well. However when it was first mentioned I should have noted the following:

- It should have been mentioned that if you want to call us Toll Free 1-888-497-7779 or locally 461-0062 we would take your credit card number and fill out tickets for you - that would make it easier for many of you.
- We have a new email address now: samf@samfoundation.ca
- Please remember your tickets must reach our office by 10 November for them to be entered in the 16 Nov 11 draw.

Thank you for your response and Good Luck. Kay Collacutt, SAMF Secretary

SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2011

NO. 1 BRITISH FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL MUSEUM ANNUALLY PRESENTS "FLIGHTS OF OUR FATHERS" WEEKEND

This year the theme will include a salute to veterans of all branches of the services, recognizing the honor and valor of our fallen service men and women, and including the ultimate sacrifice of five young men from the City of Terrell. The weekend events are included within a reunion of those men who were trained here, their offspring and friends of the museum.

AIRPORT DEDICATION - 6PM - Friday, 16 Sep 11
City of Terrell Dedication of new Airport Terminal named after Major William F. Long the U.S. civilian builder and operator of the No. 1 British Flying Training School located on the Terrell, TX Municipal Airport during WWII. The new entry to the Municipal Airport is named British Flying School Boulevard.

RECEPTION & HANGER DINNER DANCE -

6:30 PM - Friday, 16 Sep 11
Enjoy aperitifs, dining and dancing to the Heritage Brass Band's nostalgic big band sounds of the 40's, also featuring the "the Andrews Sisters" at BFTS 1's Hangar Dance. Reception from 6:30 – 7:00 pm followed by Dinner, Dancing and Entertainment until 10:30 pm.
Purchase Tickets Here

FLAG RAISING & BREAKFAST -
7:15 AM - Saturday, 17 Sep 11

Flag Raising Ceremony, Pancake Breakfast, Static Displays of Vintage Aircraft, guest speakers including Tuskegee Airmen, First person accounts of the People and Times when The British Invaded Terrell, Fly-Over, 12:00 Noon welcome from the Mayor, BFTS Chairman and sharing of proclamations and words from the British, Canadian and U.S. delegations, special presentations by noted historians, authors and English woman Code Breaker in Hut 4 at Bletchley Park plus much more.

TICKETS: Adult tickets \$5 each - \$10 per Carload.

TERRELL OAKLAND CEMETERY -

3:00 PM - Sunday, 18 Sep 11
Honor the RAF Cadets killed while in training; British War Graves, Terrell Oakland Cemetery.

Please check out our new "Guestbook". We would love to hear from you. If you would like to be on our email or postal service mailing list just let us know via the "Guestbook" or "Contact Us" page. The "Souvenir Shop" items can be purchased online.

No. 1 British Flying Training School Museum -
Terrell Municipal Airport.
119 Silent Wings Blvd
Terrell, TX 75160

Crash of Sea King 12418

As experienced by Master Corporal Ron Hill, 26 April 1973.

WHUMP ●●●● "Put her in the water" ●●●

Momentarily stunned I looked up and realized the impossible had happened, we'd ditched, we were actually in the ocean, where airplanes aren't supposed to be. The forward personnel door had come off when we hit and it looked like Niagara Falls as a great gush of water came roaring into the aircraft.

Looking over the top of my sonar set I saw one of the main rotor blades passing by slower "than usual and realized that the main rotor was stopping. Lieutenant Jespersen was alright and was preparing to abandon the helicopter. Looking to my right I saw Lieutenant Finnes (a Royal Navy exchange officer) knocking the emergency escape window out. It was now apparent that the airplane was finished so I undid the restraining straps that had kept me from slamming into the sonar set located in front of me and headed through the intrushing water to the back of the aircraft. Although the water was rising fast I tried to launch the multi-place emergency life raft.

Within a few seconds the water was up to my knees so I abandoned any further attempts to launch the raft. I started on getting myself out fast because, in addition to the rapidly rising water, the aircraft was capsizing.



With the aircraft now at a 45 degree tilt I tried to open the cargo door that opened so smoothly during the photography run we had done earlier, but it was jammed.

I asked God to forgive my sins and to look after my wife and son as I stood on the edge of the troop seat on the other side of the aircraft. The aircraft had now rolled completely on her side and was still rolling as two tons of engines and transmission continued dragging the aircraft upside down.

The aircraft lurched again and knocked me down before I could grasp the window edge. At this point I reminded myself to remain calm; panic could kill me.

Taking a last look around the interior I saw our camera in its metal box bobbing around like a toy boat floating on a lake and the rescue sling trailing along behind it.

It was getting a bit easier to reach the window as the water was now up to my chest so I kicked away from the wall of the aircraft. The momentum of the kick, combined with some vigorous treading, enabled me to reach the window opening where I pulled myself to a sitting position on the window edge.



The window was going under as I kicked away backwards from our once proud flying machine, now only a pile of scrap aluminum, bobbing upside-down in the ocean, 30 miles off the Halifax shore.

As I swam away from the aircraft I started looking for my fellow crew members and immediately spotted Lieutenant Finnes inflating his one-man dinghy, then I saw Lieutenant Harrison, the skipper. He had climbed onto the hull of the sinking aircraft in an effort to locate his crew. We waved and hollered that we were OK. But where was Lieutenant Jespersen? We had all survived the crash though as Lieutenant Jespersen was on the other side of the aircraft with the skipper.

Lieutenant Finnes then began paddling around the front of the aircraft while I started swimming on my back around the tail to join up with the pilots.

It's very easy to get separated when you are bobbing around in the vast ocean, but, by staying together, we had a better chance of being spotted and rescued. Our partner aircraft was still in the area and would begin searching for us when we didn't answer his radio calls.

As I was paddling around the tail section I saw it below the water and I wanted to make sure I wouldn't become tangled in the tail rotor so I steered a wide circle around it and spotted Lieutenants Harrison and Jespersen. As I swam toward them Lieutenant Finnes came around the nose of the aircraft. It was now almost completely submerged. Her landing gear had extended into the landing position for some unknown reason and, was now pointing forlornly at the sky.

Swimming toward my scattered crew mates bobbing in their one man dinghies my first thought was that

we should lash ourselves together to prevent our drifting apart. As my dinghy was still inside the aircraft I started gathering and lashing us together then stopped for a short rest.

Although our specially designed immersion suits leaked a little we were grateful for the insulation they provided, protecting us from the cold water and, in my case, the added buoyancy helped keep me afloat.

We all assured one another that no one was seriously injured, then began checking the back packs for emergency gear. The first order of business was locating the flares and firing up the emergency radio beacon.

The present situation was a drastic alteration from what we expected when our crew of Sea King 418 gathered in the briefing room of Anti-Submarine Squadron HS-50 on Thursday April 26th, 1973. The time was 2 PM and we were starting to brief for another routine training mission off the shores of Halifax.

It was a nice sunny afternoon and it certainly looked like good photography weather so I signed out a camera and loaded it for the trip.

The Captain of the aircraft, Lieutenant Dave Harrison, having assessed the weather conditions as suitable, instructed the navigator, Lieutenant Tony Finnes, to give the tactical briefing and inform the crew what exercises we would be practicing today on this trip.

We would proceed to the assigned training area where we would begin independent operations. About an hour later we would be joined by Sea King 414, crewed by Captain RC Sorsdahl, Capt. KW Bechervais, and Corporal GJ Seidel. Lieutenant PW Cope (RN) would also be riding along as a check pilot for this trip. The dual operations would be carried out in an area about 30 miles off shore.

Our Co-pilot, Lieutenant Stan Jespersen, then discussed actions to be taken in the event of certain emergencies with the skipper. At this point we were advised there would be a delay of about half an hour as our aircraft had a defective hydraulic line that would require changing.

When the line was finally replaced we went out for our pre-flight check on the aircraft. When we had satisfied ourselves as to the aircraft's condition the number one engine was started and 1250 horses screamed into life as the jet wound up to full power. The new hydraulic line was checked for leaks, and additional equipment checks were made. Inspection completed, number one engine looked OK. Number two engine was then started and the rotor blades engaged to prepare to take off.

The 19,000 pound Sea King is noisy and it vibrates a lot but it is no worse than most helicopters and,

satisfied with all systems, we requested and received take-off clearance from the tower. A slight increase in the noise level and we lifted off routinely and headed out to sea. The time was now 3:15 PM and we would spend the next 3 hours practicing and perfecting submarine hunting skills we hoped we would never have to use under hostile conditions.

On our way out to the area we spotted CNAV Sackville, a small auxiliary ship that would give us an excellent opportunity to brush up on our photography techniques, so I undid my safety harness and headed for the back of the aircraft to get ready.

When I had the camera ready and hooked myself to the safety strap that would prevent my falling out of the aircraft, Lieutenant Harrison gave the order to open the cargo door and we started the photo run.

After photographing down one side of the ship and back up the other side I closed the door, put the camera away, and we headed on out to our training area. On arrival in our assigned area we dropped a floating smoke marker to simulate a survivor in the water and practiced rescue techniques for about 45 minutes.

Satisfied with the rescue procedures we then went into our first dip to practice submarine hunting. The transition to a hover went well and we lowered the sonar ball into the water, where the water registered a chilly 37 degrees Fahrenheit. The aircraft was handling nicely, the sonar set worked as advertised and navigation was no problem. Why couldn't all trips work out this well?

After several more dips the first hour was finished and it was time to join 414 to do dual crew training. After appropriate joining procedures we began tracking exercises. The exercises were going smoothly and we should have no problems on our tactical crew check tomorrow if we could do as well.

The time was now 5:30 PM and we were well settled into our operating routine. We began the seventh dip transitioning into a hover forty feet above the water, and lowered the sonar ball again into the water which was still 37 degrees. After ensuring that the aircraft was maintaining a stable hover directly over the sonar cable I started my search procedures.

W H U M P ●●●● "Put her in the water" ●●●● W
H O O S H ●●●● Sea King 418 was in the water●●●●

We were fortunate that we had been working with 414 because before the emergency radio was activated she appeared on the horizon looking for us because we hadn't answered any of her radio calls. Lieutenant Jespersen ignited a red smoke flare to attract their attention and bring them over to us. It was a beautiful sight watching that Sea King coming to rescue the crew of her

fallen sister, who was by now below the waves on her way to the bottom, 500 feet down.



As I was the only one without a dinghy I was the first to be hoisted out of the water. I swam away from the others so they wouldn't be buffeted and splashed by the rotor downwash as the helicopter hovered 40 feet above us.

On 414's first pass I saw Cpl Gary Seidel a fellow Observer, leaning out the cargo

door and paying out the rescue sling for me.

The first pass took the sling past me so they made a second pass, which also went by too far away for me to reach.

By now I was starting to get tired so I stopped swimming and rested while 414 repositioned herself for a third attempt. This time they didn't try to put the sling right in my hand but instead concentrated on keeping it still in the water about 15 feet away, while I swam toward it.

When I caught up to the sling I gratefully grabbed hold of it and took another short rest to avoid overtiring myself, as well as to recover a bit from the choking spells as a result of the salt water I had swallowed from the rotor downwash.

Although my hands were now numb from the cold water there was no way I intended to let go of the precious rescue sling. I soon felt ready to start climbing into the sling, but my inflated lifejacket was hindering my progress. Struggling with the sling, and my life-jacket, I finally managed to get my right arm and head through but I was getting tired so I took another short rest.

Now rested once again, I fought my left arm through the sling and gave Gary a thumbs up signal, indicating I was ready to be hoisted. Riding up on that slim cable I couldn't help thinking about the times I had ridden on similar cables during my helicopter conversion course. The bottom of the aircraft above me sure looked much prettier than the bottom of the aircraft on the training missions.

When I arrived outside the door I was turned around and dragged into the aircraft where I was helped into the troop seat. Gary removed the rescue sling from around me and loosened my life jacket while Lieutenant Cape lowered the hoist for the rescue of my comrades.

After I regained my breath a bit I went forward in the aircraft to get out of the way of rescue operations. Sitting in my usual seat in front of the sonar set I thanked God for our survival and safe rescue while I desperately tried to warm my frozen fingers.

Lieutenants Finnes and Jespersen and finally Lieutenant Harrison were finally hoisted aboard, just 18 minutes after beginning rescue operations and about 40 minutes after ditching our aircraft, 414 set course for Canadian Forces Base Shearwater. There an ambulance would be waiting to whisk us off to the hospital where we all would be given thorough medical examinations. In addition the flight safety organization would be waiting to get statements from us while the events were fresh in our minds.

Lieutenant Finnes and myself had luckily escaped with minor injuries and were permitted to rejoin our worried families that evening, but Lieutenants Harrison and Jespersen, having sustained serious back injuries, had to remain in the hospital for a week before being released.

On May 9th I was once again airborne, however Lieutenants Harrison and Jespersen were grounded for about three months to allow their backs to heal properly. Lieutenant Finnes was also grounded for a short period before being pronounced fit to fly.

A board of inquiry was immediately ordered to determine the cause and make recommendations to prevent a reoccurrence of the accident. Plans were also made to salvage the wreckage to assist in the investigation.

Addendum: The author continued to fly as a crew member in the Sea King until the end of 1978 with HS50, HS443 and VT406 squadrons, accumulating a total of 1166.2 Sea King hours.

An article was published about the Sea King fleet (believed to be in Airforce magazine approximately 2008) containing a reference to the Board of Inquiry finding as follows:

While crew training in the local Shearwater dip sector area, one engine failed in the hover due to a No. 2 bearing static failure. Initially slow to recognize the single-engine condition, the pilot allowed the aircraft to heavily impact the water at which point the aircraft was assessed as unfit for further flight. The crew safely egressed the damaged aircraft and were rescued by a second Sea King crew operating in the adjoining dip sector.

The Sikorsky CH-124 Sea King helicopter is powered by two GE T58 axial flow gas turbine engines of the turbo shaft type. The helicopter is capable of air speeds up to 144 knots, and, in 1962 broke the worlds speed record at 210.7 miles per hour. Endurance varies between 3.0 and 5 hours with a mean fuel consumption of 1000 pounds of fuel per hour. The helicopter is 72 feet 7 inches long, 59

feet 4 inches wide and has a maximum gross weight of 19,000 lbs. With the anti-submarine equipment removed the CH-124 can transport up to 25 troops internally or up to 4000 lbs of cargo.

The normal crew consists of 3 officers and 1 man, two pilots, one navigator and one observer.

HS-50 squadron was commissioned in 1954 as an experimental squadron to devise techniques and evaluate airborne dunking sonar. Originally the squadron was equipped with Sikorsky H04S-3 helicopters but converted to the CH-124, also made by Sikorsky.

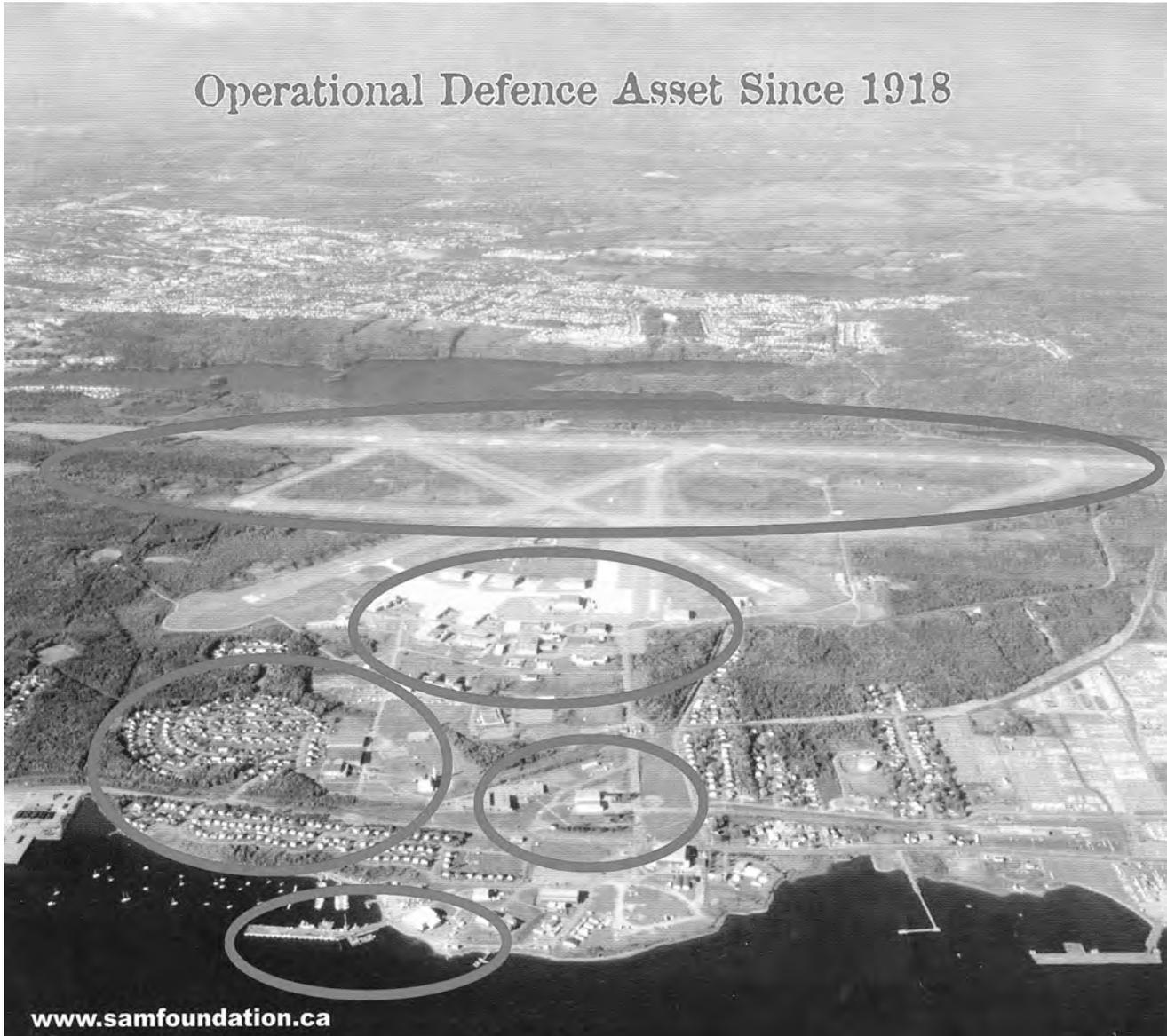


All the nice girls love a sailor
 All the nice girls love a tar.
 For there's something about a sailor
 Well you know what sailor's are.
 Bright and breezy, free and easy,
 He's a lady's pride and job.
 Falls in love with Kate and Jane
 And he's off to sea again.
 Ship ahoy! Sailor boy!



Names Please

Operational Defence Asset Since 1918



(Worth a second read for those who don't believe, realize or even care what we have at Shearwater. Ed)

Ornithology and Zoology Terms

(in part) Prepared in 2006 by Bill Farrell

For some years now the Developer Vultures, an odious and malodorous sub-species known as Vulturi Haligoni, have been circling the skies over Shearwater hungrily, drooling and slavering over what they see as their next free meal.

Note part of the 2006 cover photo above. See that oval smack dab in the middle? That encloses the inner and outer ramps, hangars and control tower – together, able to accommodate heavy lift fixed-wing aircraft, tactical support helicopters and fighters – and also civil commercial aircraft when DND awakens to the wisdom of sharing operating costs with the commercial aviation industry. There exist combined military/civil airfields around the

world. They work well.

Now see that oval just above the water in the lower left hand corner? That's the married quarters. Just outside it, at about two o'clock, is the barracks. An Olympic swimming pool, a gymnasium and a lakeside beach go with that personnel accommodation complex. In the surrounding city are hospitals, schools, high schools, universities, theatres, yacht clubs, golf courses and more. If we hope to recruit and retain the best of our citizenry, inducements of comfortable, stable community social life should be strong drawing cards.

The prospect of "shifting camp" every two or three years as is now the case may explain current recruiting and retention problems. There must be a lot of 'desperate housewives' out there – and a lot of insecure youths without enduring, lifelong friendship.

See the small oval near the bottom of the photo?

That's the dock and surrounding hardstand. That's where our carriers berthed and whence they departed for war, peace keeping and disaster relief missions. It's also a potential home for Special Forces landing craft. Surrounding it is hardstand acreage for ready-to-embark containers packed for specific categories of mission – disaster relief, peace-keeping, war or whatever. With a carrier/support ship at the dock, containers loaded and standing by and troops in barracks ashore Canada can be 'Ready, Aye Ready when the call comes. And, when Canada finally tries to catch up with the rest of the world in acquiring a tall ship for cadet training, what a home for such a ship! As our separate services draw closer together tall ship experience for soldiers and airmen, as well as seamen, will be a recruiting draw attracting the cream of Canadian youth.

Look at that oval near the Y axis, about an inch above the water?

That's where a four-lane highway and a railway intersect the main base road that connects the airfield with its 9000' runway with the marine base and its dock and container yarding area. It is all such a perfect fit for envisaged "expeditionary" operations that a charge of prescience could well be laid against those who made the base grow in this direction over the past half-century. If one were to build a new base from scratch one would have to use the present base as a template. But where would he find the land to build on? Mark Twain said "buy land son. They ain't makin' any more of it".



Russian Antonov

And now look at that large oval near the middle of the photo?

That's a 9000' runway capable of handling the largest heavy lift aircraft in the world (the **Russian Antonov** we rent when we go to war as an independent self-sufficient nation state). That runway is absolutely irreplaceable – there is no place close to our Halifax naval base on which a replacement could be built. As Mark Twain (again) said when asked for advice on investing "buy land son, they ain't makin' any more of it". Airlift, as well as sealift, are essential to any independent Canadian expeditionary or contingency force. It truly boggles the mind that government has not long ago abandoned the hare-brained idea of selling-off this vital Canadian defence asset.

(Thanks to the MND Peter McKay, the 'Vulturi Haligoni' didn't get it. Ed)

Back to the photo one more time. See the sprawling area lying outside the ovals? That's unused land that could be used for urban/guerrilla warfare practice and/or general aviation manufacturing and maintenance.

Off-screen to the left is an oil refinery for fuel supplies and further off-screen ship-repair and ship-fabrication yards. Ye Gods and little fishes! How did Canada luck into owning a defence asset *tailor-made to its needs of today? Maybe the Gods just like us more than we know?*

Arctic Sovereignty

written by the late Bill Farrell.

Much has been said on this issue by pols and pundits. I'll be brief: Our best defence, indeed our only defence, of our claim to the northern part of Earth's crust and to the mineral resources that may lie beneath the encircling ocean is the aegis of international law. A few lightly-armed icebreakers would be brushed aside by any of the world's superpowers – brushed aside cavalierly. Ironically, the most likely raptor of those resources is our great protector below our southern border – the military-industrial behemoth whose motto might well be not "In God we trust" but "Might makes right".

(Rumour has it that the AWACs aircraft will be departing Germany in the not too distant future. Wonder what's in store for them. Perhaps they could be used to watch over the Arctic resources - perhaps they could be located here at Shearwater - I feel certain Shearwater could entertain two functions - Helicopters flying off ships and the AWACs doing another job. However, this will, no doubt, never happen. The AWACs will probably be dismantled or some such foolish, wasteful thing. Ed)



NATO AWAC AIRCRAFT

30th CARRIER AIR GROUP "SMOKER" MALTA JULY 1952



**30TH CARRIER AIR GROUP "SMOKER"
MALTA G.C. JULY 1952**

From Gord Foster:

This photo is, I believe, an official one taken on that day by the ship's photo guy. The two in the foreground, each with the required refreshment, which as far as I can recall, was the local beer in bottles, are Bruce (Knobby) McNab and 'Skinny' Wilson. That day was pretty much a scorcher and sun burn became the 'rig of the day'.

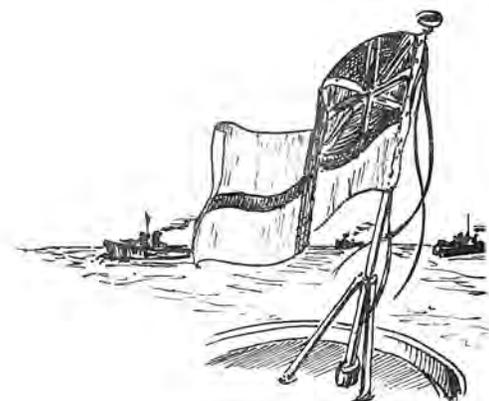
The Squadron I was in was VF871 and we were the so called "Ryan's Red Raiders". At that time we were ashore at Halfar RN Naval Air Base and our Squadron did some flying with our Sea furies from there. The RRR label came about, as I remember, earlier back in Shearwater when our CO LCdr Ryan at a squadron muster in the hangar announced that the squadron would embark HMCS magnificent for deployment and join, with a Royal Navy carrier of the same class as magnificent - our eventual area of operations would be in the Korean theatre. I believe at that time LCdr Ryan provided the opportunity to 'volunteer' and received a one hundred percent affirmative - aye aye, Sir!

A few days later one of the squadron wags came up with the RRR title and it stuck. Our winter line jackets shortly sported three red painted RRR's on the back and although probably against pusser regs, they were allowed to

remain. The stay at Halfar in the RN Nissen huts was a very interesting time and between the RCN squadron members and the Australian Air Force squadron personnel there was some really lively times held in the base NAAFI!

It was rumoured at one time that the commander in Chief royal Navy, Lord Louis Mountbatten had suggested that an improvement in department of RCN members was required - or else!

Shortly after that, we re-embarked our ship and left Malta's shores...



But Sir, I'm a Reserve

W.L. Ewing, Ex LS RCN(R)

I joined VC-920 Squadron, RCN (R)...

"Okay! Who wants to go flying?" Those words were almost my initial greeting the day I joined VC-920 Squadron, RCN (R). The Squadron Exec., Lt (P) "Buck" Rogers, had come into the coffee room looking for some mobile ballast for his latest test flight. The crew had just finished an inspection on one of the Harvards and the unwritten rule was, if you worked on it, you had better be ready to fly in it. I hadn't been with VC-920 very long (about half-an-hour), but I was dead keen, so when no-one else volunteered, I stood up. Oh, the snide remarks!! You can imagine them but I won't repeat them. And to the new guy on the crew, too.

I drew my parachute and headset. Groundcrew were lucky(?) in those days. We got away with flying in our work rig. Aircrew got to wear the lot: flightsuit, boots, gloves, helmet and parachute. Buck checked to make sure I was strapped in properly and briefed me on using the correct switch for the Intercom. Using the Tx switch bungs up the tower frequencies and has a tendency to anger controllers. He also told me, "Keep your flaming hands off *everything* until I tell you otherwise." So there I sat, petrified, while he started up, taxied out and we were airborne.

I had been flying before and in Harvards, but this was a full-card test flight. In preparation, I had snubbed the harness straps down tight...however!! I had failed to make a stop at the "heads" prior to take-off. Bad mistake!! And the last time I was to make that particular one. A full bladder during aerobatics is a *pain*. Rolls to the right! Rolls to the left! Loops! And (urp!) spins!!

Just as I was about to start searching for one of those little white bags, Buck leveled out and squawked me on the Intercom. "How are you feeling back there....sick yet?" Oh, he how could be so cheerful. "If things get bad, give a holler and I'll slide the canopy open and give you some air."

I gulped. My reply was weak but it came out, "Fine. Just fine."

"Well, if you're up to it, we'll go down and do a little low level stuff."

Oh great!! Up here it was loops and rolls, but at least it was cool. Down there it was about 90oF. But down we went....Buck, me, and four thousand pounds of Harvard. You know, trees look taller when you are flashing by them at 150 mph and at ground level. And that close to the ground, it gets bumpy. The more we bumped, the whiter I got. This was not my day. "Air!" It came out garbled, but luckily it was the only thing that came out.

Buck looked back over his shoulder, took one quick peek, slide the canopy open with one hand and hauled back on the stick with the other. I couldn't be sick now...."G"-forces wouldn't let me.

Back at a higher altitude where it was cooler and flying straight and level, it wasn't bad. Rogers didn't fool around but headed right back to the bran.

With both feet on solid tarmac, I was damp from the heat of the trip but I hadn't been sick. Close, but not sick. My record was still unbroken. Buck slapped me on the back. He grinned. Dammit!! I had been set up!! Those guys had deliberately sat back and waited for me to bite. If I hadn't, I probably would have been tagged anyway. What a hell of a way to get initiated into a squadron.

But initiated I was. The rest of the crew had been standing outside of the hangar and when I walked across the tarmac I was greeted with good-natured digs...most to do with the colour of my complexion.

It wasn't to be my last flight with Lt. "Buck" Rogers but it was the roughest. It proved to work out for me though. I had passed through the RCN's School of Naval Air Maintenance (something that not all Reservists managed), and with Buck's recommendation, I qualified as a Plane Captain on the squadron's TBM-3m Avengers and ended up crewing for the Commanding Officer, Lt. Commander Derek Tissington.....but then, that's another story!!



Names Please

“Slices of Lead Ballast Raining Out of the Sky”

Ron Heath

To Begin ...

I started flying the Sea Fury when I joined the 19th CAG in Northern Ireland in the spring of 1947, and finished when I left as CO of VF 871 in March 1953 when I went on exchange with the US Navy to fly Banshees. At that time I had nearly 1000 hours on the Sea Fury, which was obviously the best piston-driven fighter aircraft in the world at the time.



Sea Fury Aircraft

Subsequently, in 1956-58 I was the Staff Officer (Fighter Aircraft) at Naval Headquarters, and saw the transfer of about 50 Sea Furies to Crown Assets for disposal -- a rather ignominious end

to a super airplane. Several years later, as the Staff Officer (Aviation) in the Directorate of Naval Plans, I was directed to draft the message to SACLANT notifying the withdrawal of fighter aircraft from the RCN's Naval Aviation component -- for me a heartbreaking task after so many lives and so much effort had been dedicated to that role.

WEE Following my first tour with the 19th CAG in Northern Ireland, we brought *Magnificent* back to Canada; and during that summer in 1948 Jim Hunter asked me if I wanted to the serve on exchange as the Navy representative with the RCAF Winter Experimental Establishment in *Edmonton*, with detachments at *Watson Lake* and *Fort Churchill*. So in the summer of 1948, I went to the WEE Flight where I stayed for three years each winter testing the naval aircraft on attachment, which at that time consisted of the Firefly, Sea Fury, Sea Hornet and subsequently the Avenger.

The Sea Fury we had to test was TG 117, which subsequently was crashed by an RCAF Flying Officer on the 30th of January just after I left the WEE in 1951. Most people aren't aware of the range of activity that cold-weather testing involves and how important it is to the well-being of aircraft that have to operate in cold-weather climates. For a pilot, obviously, it was an ideal situation because you had about 17 or 18 types of aircraft, single-engine to four-engine airplanes, some jets, transports, bombers, etc, and you got the opportunity to fly all of those; in fact, you were expected to fly them. For that period of time I got a very wide range of exposure to not only cold-weather flying but different types of aircraft, flying with representatives from the US and Canada. Because many of the Air Force pilots were sent on courses during the summer months, I became the checkout pilot for most

of the aircraft held at WEE.

Hank Leidl was at WEE when I first got there with the Sea Fury. Although I explained to him about the interconnected controls in the Sea Fury between the boost and the RPM, he apparently did not fully understand it. He decided to take the airplane one day from *Watson Lake* to *Whitehorse* to pick up the payroll for the whole section at *Watson Lake*. He neglected to refuel at *Whitehorse* because he thought he was in weak mixture en route, using only a few psi of boost when he was at 14,000 and 15,000 feet. He was using high RPM, however, and so was in rich mixture, thus using very high fuel consumption. After flying several hundred miles over vast wilderness areas a hundred miles from anywhere, his engine cut out over *Watson Lake* and he did a "deadstick" landing. He came in very pleased with himself because he managed to salvage the airplane, only to find himself rather in the dog house as he was totally out of fuel. So the luck of that happening and his arriving at the airfield with no fuel was simply miraculous. He took it all very philosophically, as he always did.

It was during that time that the Korean War broke out and, because I was one of the very few pilots in Canada with jet experience, I applied to Ottawa to go to Korea on exchange with the USN or the USAF to get some operational experience. This, I thought, was logical but, when broached, was greeted with laughter as being highly improbable by Ottawa. As it turned out two or three years later, that's where I belatedly ended up -- in the *USS Yorkton* in the Far East.

Of Special Note In retrospect, there are two main recollections that loom large as far as I'm concerned with regard to the fighter pilots over those and the subsequent years with the Banshees. The first relates to the people concerned -- Al Woods, Brian Bell-Irving, Dave Etchells and others. They are simply representative of a group of real characters who were the backbone of not only the fighter but also the anti-submarine side of Naval Aviation, and who to a large extent, were totally under-estimated as to the true professionals they were. I served on exchange, or trained, with the RCAF, RAF, RCN, RN and the USN over fair periods of time, so I had the opportunity to appreciate the quality of a wide range of aviators; and by and large the professionalism, attitude and sheer guts of the people that served the RCN and therefore Canada were just outstanding. The backup from the engineering, servicing and maintenance was also superb.

My second recollection is that we had this group of dedicated flyers, engineering personnel and maintenance people who performed astoundingly well given the tools with which they had to operate. The operational capability provided by these maintenance and operational crews and their backup far exceeded that of other navies and air

forces using far more sophisticated and modernized equipment. One just has to think back, for example, to the *Maggie* and *Bonaventure* days when both the Turkey/CS2F drivers were flying routinely in weather (fog and sea state) in which even major air airlines would be grounded. Some may remember the "Blue-Assed Fly" Sea Fury created by marrying two pranged Sea Fury fuselages, put together by Dave Litle and his crew, in the *Maggie* hangar at sea. Fantastic! Yet most of our operational commanders (non-aviators) came to regard all this as routine, whereas other (USN) commanders cancelled flying operations. I remember once, as Little (F) in *Bonaventure*, when a USN Group Commander landed (after several passes) ostensibly to arrange some CS2F cross-training on our respective carriers. White-faced from his ordeal, he cancelled any possibility of his crews' landing on our carrier – from which we of course were operating "routinely."

In the Med An incident in which I was involved with Shamus Dawson regarding a brake failure in a Sea Fury landing at Athens goes back to the summer of 1952, when I was CO of 871 operating from *Maggie*. We had four aircraft ashore because we couldn't land aboard the ship through lack of wind in the Mediterranean; and when she pulled into Athens we got two of those aircraft on board, but I kept two of them out (along with one Turkey). We flew these three to Istanbul where the fleet was headed to join up with the British fleet. When King Farouk kicked over the traces in Egypt, there was a general recall about one o'clock in the morning for all of our troops, pilots and so on, who were ashore nightclubbing it up in Istanbul. Knowing that I had two aircraft ashore, I went to Commander Air, Abrams, RN and pointed out my dilemma of having two aircraft ashore. He wrote me up a very delightful authorization on behalf of His Majesty, authorizing me to proceed with a team ashore and to join ship when we were able to do so later.

As it turned out, we couldn't, by international agreement, land in either the Dardanelles or the Bosphorus as the ship sailed for Egypt. So about eight of us, which included Shamus (then a sub-lieutenant), myself, Paddy O'Connell (the Turkey driver), Jimmy Johnson (the navigator of the Turkey), and servicing people under the leadership of Chief Clifford Hart, were ashore. We had to wait in Istanbul, obviously having to partake of the hospitality that had originally been scheduled for thousands of NATO sailors, awaiting our orders to come through from our carrier, which eventually told us to proceed to Malta.

We flew from Istanbul to Rome en route to Malta, with an interim stop at Athens. We got into Athens quite comfortably in beautiful weather and did what we had to at Istanbul at the south side of the airport which was the old Greek Air Force side, and on a Saturday morning decided to fly into Rome. We had filed an IFR flight plan for the two aircraft and were lined up on the runway, had our engines

running and our IFR clearance, when Shamus called me and asked to go to our squadron frequency, over which he told me that he had a brake failure. So here we have two aircraft sitting on the runway, with IFR clearance, ready to go. I wasn't interested in facing the prospect of having an airplane waiting at Athens while we got the necessary airbags, compressors or whatever to get her out, so we kept the engines running and I agreed to get into his airplane and say nothing about the brake failure, as the air pressure was building up OK.

We took off uneventfully and went up fairly high because there were very, very strong headwinds -- so strong in fact that we had to divert to Naples with which I had had some familiarity from before. They had a lovely runway there, about 11,000 feet long and so on, but mindful that I had a dippy brake, I was watching the air pressure very carefully. It seemed OK and so I thought I wasn't in too much difficulty. In any case, they had a full runway to land on so there was no problem. Unfortunately, we couldn't raise anyone on the radio; it was a Saturday afternoon and the tower wasn't answering as there was no traffic around, so we eventually selected the longest runway and landed on it. Still trying to raise the tower and trying to decide to turn left or right, I went to the end of the runway. This was a mistake because as I got to the end I elected to turn left to go over to the US Navy side, the FASRON, the Fleet Air Service Squadron, where at least they could speak English.

On turning left I punched the brake handle and the aircraft veered to the right and I drove into what turned out to be three parked Vampires in a line of 15 or so. That big five-bladed prop just chewed into the wing of the first Vampire that I met, knocked it around, and banged into another one. The first thing I saw was slices of lead ballast raining out of the sky just like pieces of bread neatly sliced by the prop. Now, Shamus taxied by holding his nose in dismay and awe at the carnage. He shut off his aircraft and we sat there in the silence, nothing happening: no fire trucks, no rescue crew, and we were still a good mile and a half from anybody, so we simply waited. About an hour and a half later a little man came along on a bicycle, did a beautiful double take, accelerated his pace and tore off. Very shortly after that all hell broke loose. The Commandant, the fire truck, all the people and the photographers and so on showed up (I persuaded the photographer to photograph the brake handle on with the pressure still high, for the record). The Commandant was far more concerned about my aircraft than he was about the Vampires that I had demolished because he could always get those renewed by handing in a request chit to the RAF or NATO.

We had our lunch and waited for the Turkey boys to arrive, which they did in due course. We had the aircraft towed over to the US Navy FASRON people, who simply wanted to put it in a transport and fly it to Malta. That idea didn't appeal to me very much. I eventually decided that if the

aircraft engine was sound I would try to fly it as it was to Malta. Because the undercarriage doors were smashed in where they had collided with the Vampire, I decided I would need a sledge hammer to knock them out, so that when the wheels came up, at least the metal wouldn't get crimped into the door wells and force a wheels up landing at Malta, resulting in even greater damage.

I asked Chief Hart if he could undertake to do that and he absolutely refused; undoubtedly it cut across the very nature of his trade of fixing aircraft, not damaging them! To me the options were very few, so I asked for and got a sledge hammer from the FASRON, and hammered out all the metal that needed to be free when the wheels retracted so that they wouldn't get locked up. We looked at the airplane and had a couple of metal patches put on it. The tailplane appendage was moved over -- you could tell by the new paint that was showing around the perimeter of the tail empennage by about a couple of inches, that the airplane wasn't all that serviceable by conventional maintenance standards. But I eventually decided that it was a go situation provided that I could do a mag check.

We got an old mule tractor and roped it to the Sea Fury, which of course still had no brakes, and we towed it to the end of the runway. I'll never forget: there was a little man with a pick cutting back the grass beside the runway. He would look up as we slowly towed the aircraft by him, went to the end of the runway and had chocks put in. Then he saw us flash up the Fury, aiming it up the runway still chocked up. He just threw down his pick, and the last I saw of him he was running across the tarmac away from these crazy bloody people. I did a mag check and it seemed OK, so I waved away the chocks and off we went.

The only concern I had was Malta's fairly short strip. If you landed one way, you had to face the possibility that, if you couldn't stop, you'd run over a cliff into the water. In any case, it wasn't a very eventful trip; I landed short of the runway in a cloud of dust. The airplane was subsequently towed over and given an engine change, and the whole affair simply passed into history. As far as I was concerned, it had accomplished the purpose of minimizing the need to rescue an airplane stranded several hundred miles away.

The interesting thing to me was that 10 years later I was sitting at my desk in Ottawa when a very thick file was passed to me. It was the record of the collision with the Vampires. The top letter was written by the Chief of the Italian Air Force along with all the correspondence between them and the RCAF -- nothing whatever to do with the RCN. The top letter from the Chief of the Italian Air Force said that in view of the excellent relationship between his air force and the RCAF, this accident was considered never to have happened: it blamed the RCAF and, with a typically European touch, declared that it never happened at all! My "G" tolerance was certainly very helpful in fighter tactics. It was *bona fided* following an airshow in Edmonton in

which I wrinkled a main spar and wing of the WEE Sea Fury. For that they sent me down to the Institute of Aviation Medicine in Toronto, where they put me through the accelerometer. After a series of tests I got as high as 7 "G" and they wouldn't test me any higher than that. I was subsequently sent to Farnborough in 1952 to test "G" suits in Vampires and Meteors. I was able to 7.5 "G" for 21 seconds, which is what it took me to spiral down from 25,000 feet in a Vampire, so my "G" tolerance was considerably higher than that of most people and it was very helpful in flying fighters. I don't know why or what to attribute it to, but in my early '60s I had occasion to go through a whole series of stress tests etc, and the final word from the specialists was that I had then the cardiovascular system of a 30-year-old. As a young man, I thought that good physical conditioning was important in the life of a fighter pilot, and I think that contributed significantly to my very high "G" tolerance and made it much easier to be in the fighter business.

Prangs I can remember a number of prangs. On one occasion, we were following JoJo (J.J. MacBrien) in to Dartmouth and he was practicing low-level aerobatics over the sea at about 500 feet. He was just coming up to McNabs Island when several puffs of smoke came from his aircraft, and that is exactly where he ditched Sea Fury TG 116 on 22 March 1949. Another one I remember was Al Woods ditching in the ocean off Chezzetcook on 1 May '51. Also in 1951, Squadron CO Doug Peacocke and I were doing fighter leading sections and fighter direction exercises when he called up that he was having engine failure. He managed to set her down in Wright's Lake, and when we eventually located him, his wingman John Morehouse joined up with Mike Turner and myself. We circled around and I sent young Morehouse to do on-the-job spotting while we reported the progress by air. He spun in, trying too tight a turn. One of the toughest jobs any commander has to do is the rendering of condolences to the family members.

IFR Instrument (IFR) flying of fighter aircraft wasn't really the accepted thing, but when we were in Northern Ireland in 1947 and '48 I was very impressed with Jim Hunter's ability to take off IFR out of Londonderry and land in London, England. Once, after such a flight in the usual bad weather, when asked by the tower where he was, he replied that he was taxiing on the London runway. IFR equipment then was very rudimentary -- a coffee grinder and a little Low Frequency Receiver, plus basic instruments. That's just one example of the kind of master craftsman Jim Hunter was; everything he did with regard to Naval Aviation was like that, and not too many people give him the recognition he deserves in RCN aviation. His instrument flying and his attitude towards it, as well as the flying freedom it provided, made an early impression on me.

As noted, in the early days, the ability to fly without reference to the ground (instrument flying) for day fighter pilots was not regarded very highly, let alone essential,

but I had a very different attitude toward instrument flying, and so I sought out and got my Instrument Rating as soon as possible.

In fact, Bill Atkinson (CO of his Avenger squadron), and I with my Sea Furies, filed instrument flight plans all across Canada, using one or two instrument cards, making instrument letdowns as required at places like *Rivers* and *Edmonton* en route. The traffic control people were very accommodating; they simply didn't know what to do with an entire flight/squadron flying on a single instrument card IFR, and gave us carte blanche to do what we wanted. It was very impressive, after landing at *Rivers* in a snow storm, to watch the lowest Avenger in a flight of four being dropped off one by one as they became visible out of the cloud and snow and landed, while the flight commander went around again IFR, to drop off the next aircraft.

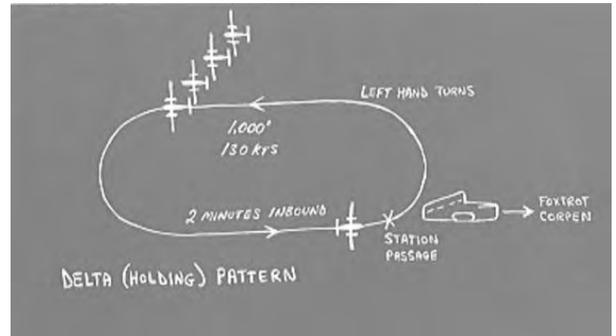
Even the RCAF CFO was impressed, as the base had been closed due to bad weather. Of course, as CS2Fs, Banshee all weather fighters, and the all-weather helicopters came onto the inventory, instrument flying became an essential part of training -- but it sure was not like that at the beginning of Canadian Naval Aviation.

In closing ... Johnny Runciman is famous for that beautiful saying as to how he handled deck landings at sea in a Sea Fury. When he got low at the ramp he just "gave her the power and let the torque take her" which was a great throw-away line, and highly **not** recommended.



MAGGIE BRIEFING 1951

FR: Tom Copeland Bob Rogers Clive Thompson
BR: Dave Williams Harvey 'Moose' Mills 'ACE' Harnell
E. Marshall



IN THE DELTA

Aggas, Vera
Boyle, Willard
Brown, Norman Leslie (Les)
Carpenter, Stan
Carscadden, Robert
Conway, Grace
Derbyshire, Stephen
Downey, Al
Dunnett, Mona
Eddy, Keith
Fralic, Marie
Gagnon, Emery
German, Tony
Gourlie, John
Hewens, Clarence
Kenny, Phillip
Larsen - Ogden, Joan
LeBlanc, Lou
Labrie, Gervais (Gerry)
Lewis, Keith
Lightfoot, Janet
MacDonald, Dorin
MacKay, Ian (Mid)
Reynolds, Loren
Sellers, Millie
Snelling, Sydney
Sunderland, Eldon
Sutherland, Donald
Swan, Andrew
Thomas, Lenny
Zwicker, Doris

Chuck O'Neill writes : 081 Banyan 2011



Standing: Jim Cope, Ted Procher, Yves Martel, Jim Cannon Terry Lynch, Nancy Lynch, Pat Boudreau, John Slor, Ian Lawther, Paul Baiden
Seated: Chuck O'Neill, Harry Windsor, John Thompson

Just back from the Port Hope gathering, had time to think as I was eastbound on 401 alone and was digesting all the wonderful stories which were kicked around at the Legion and my room after.

It struck me that about 45 to 50 years ago we were all so young, all RCN lads and had come from all over this great nation of ours. Our paths came together in Shearwater where we all embarked on a new and wonderful venture which would not only ingest a lot of excitement into our lives, but start a brotherhood which is unexplainable to most but precious beyond words. Our blood families naturally are always there, but (in my case) to go from two brothers to countless dozens in a matter of a couple short years and have these brothers still being so important in my life is hard to comprehend.

So, it doesn't really matter where we came from then or now, what really only matters is that we have this incredible capacity to love and understand each other in a way that only we know, and very few will ever have the opportunity to duplicate. My thoughts for tonight gentlemen, these gatherings are becoming more important to us all, may they continue until we all gather in the Delta for the final one.

Yours Aye, Chuck O.



Harry Windsor, Chuck O'Neil, Pat Boudreau, Ted Procher, Nancy Lynch

(On 25 Feb 09, Mr. Bruce Vibert presented the following briefing to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust SWORDFISH DINNER. We apologize for any errors in our transcribing of this briefing. Editor)

FLY NAVY HERITAGE TRUST - SWORDFISH DINNER

First Sea Lord, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman

My brief for this evening is to describe the work my squadron 842 did on the North Atlantic and in the Arctic. That work was anti-submarine in defence of convoys. Work similar to that of several other squadrons, some represented here.

First, some background.

The carriers. Close protection of Atlantic convoys was not the job of our few Fleet carriers, but of two smaller and distinct types. One was the Merchant Aircraft Carrier, better known as the MAC ship. It was a working grain or tanker with a lid on. The other the Escort Carrier, a few our own mercantile conversion, the rest an American-built adaption of an established cargo hull. Ours was the latter. 'HMS Fencer'. Displacing 10,000 tons, steam driven single screw to 17 kts. A wooden flight deck 450' long by 80' wide with 8 arrestor wires and a barrier to protect aircraft parked forward.



HMS FENCER

The full-length hangar, served by two lifts, took 18 aircraft. We were a composite squadron of 10 Swordfish and a fighter component of Seafire and/or Grumman Wildcat.

My aircraft was the Swordfish which, is an open-cockpit three seater. It is mainly made of duralumin tubing and canvas. The wings fold manually and the undercarriage is both spring and oleo. Cruising around 82 kts, it will safely reach 210, in 80° dive. Stall starts just below 60kts. It is highly manoeuvrable.



Swordfish (Stringbag)

The nickname "Stringbag" is not derived from the bracing wires. A pilot once remarked to his wife about the variety of objects it could carry and where. She replied 'like a string bag' after the shopping article.

The Convoys. Somewhere, on the Atlantic alone, perhaps 10 or more on any one day. Most of those we escorted were designated 'Slow'. Sailing in columns, they presented a broad front.

The carrier's place was 'in-the-box' (the middle) cleared of other ships. There, if wind direction allowed, antisubmarine patrols were both launched and recovered in one manoeuvre. Otherwise outside, unprotected, except for one escort, close on the starboard quarter to pick up aircrew lost over the side.

To ensure the carrier remained on a committed course for the shortest possible time, this manoeuvre, whether inside or out, required good co-ordination between ship, pilots and those on deck.

The escorts. Initially only RN and few of them. By 1943 they included ships of our allies, Canada for example. Her Navy began the war with 11 small ships and ended with nearly 400, and as the world's 3rd largest allied Navy, with overall responsibility for the Western Atlantic.

The RCN helped to escort 182 million tons of supplies to us and to Russia. To visualise that, take the rail-line from Canada's east coast to that on the west and place the entire length, with American freight cars and fill them all. Multiply by 11. Uniquely, RCN personnel were volunteers, all 96,000 of them.

The U-boats. When submerged, slower than most convoys, faster than most on the surface where, in line abreast and widely spaced, they hunted in packs. I believe first sight of a ship's top-hammer on a good day, through glasses, from a Vllc's conning tower, was about 20 miles. From periscope depth, about 2 miles.

In 1943 occurred something new. An aircraft sank a U-boat with the rocket projectile. From an escort carrier, on the North Atlantic, a Swordfish, aided by a Wildcat, sank U-752. The next day Admiral Doenitz temporarily withdrew

his boats from the area.

The work. To keep boats at a distance and to drive them down. We carried either depth-charges or rocket projectiles. From before dawn until after dusk, with a fighter on standby, 2\two Swordfish, separately, patrolled 25 miles ahead, and down each side, of the convoy. Flown at 1500', this lasted 24 hours, sometimes longer.

Throughout the flight the pilot accurately flew every course his Observer gave him; failure to do so could be fatal. Equipment was Mk.I eyeball and radar of short range. During flight, wind direction was checked by dropping a smoke float, by night a flame float. R/T silence was kept, but the Telegraphist Air Gunner listened on his set. There was no heating in the aircraft.

We watched the waves for that which did not break and for white water in the distance which could be a boat on the surface. The dusk patrol was far astern from our receding base, to discourage a boat aiming to catch up to the convoy overnight on the surface. When due to return, if into a headwind, was there enough fuel left? If no moon, first sight of home, was phosphorescence below from ships wakes. That too was the MAC ship's work but, with no more than four Swordfish, scaled down.

Rather boring work, but with ears cocked to the beat of the engine. I know of no instance when, on the North Atlantic convoy run, the Swordfish tangled with enemy aircraft. Our main dangers were engine failure, getting lost, and returning to the deck.

That deck. Wing-tip clearance from deck-edge on our carrier was 17'. From that on a MAC ship 7'. For good vision ahead, approach was 'on-the-turn', guided down by the Deck Landing Control Officer, giving mandatory signals with a pair of yellow bats. At night with lights. Just short of the round-down, by then hanging on the prop, one straightened out before getting the signal to cut the throttle and land, into a length little more than that of a tennis court, often pitching and heaving, with some roll added, and there, hopefully, to catch an arrester wire. Here is where many of us, believe the Swordfish was in a class of its own, and why it lasted until the end of war with Germany.

Slow speed, quick response on the controls and the undercarriage were the main features of a safe landing. If one missed all wires and hit the barrier, the engine would probably shock-load. Some landings were spectacular.

One day in the Bay of Biscay, came evidence of a storm not far away. The wind dropped to nothing but left a long swell. The ship could not find any wind down a very uncertain deck. There were three Swordfish to recover. The first crashed ahead of the barrier, the second into the barrier and the third bounced hard before trying to go

round again. It drifted to starboard and hit the mast above the bridge and swivelled round it before plunging vertically into the water. The open cockpit saved all the crew.

The storm. It came that night. A roll of 44° was recorded. Those in their bunks had to tie themselves in. Welded-down wardroom fittings such as tables broke adrift. Similar chaos in other spaces. The ship's hull, only 1" welded, developed a short split at hangar level. There all aircraft and other gear, was triple-lashed with bottle-screw lashings. Nothing shifted. The following afternoon the storm abated, but the convoy was scattered and had to be rounded up quickly.

The Captain summoned a Seafire pilot to the bridge to inform him that he had applied for that job and, when he returned, he would crash. Off went that pilot, did his job and returned, ending up on his back.

The Seafire is a delicate flower with wheels down and not quick to repair, unlike the Swordfish. With that aircraft, the engine, undercarriage and even a mainplane can be replaced overnight and the thing flown next day.

Takeoff also holds hazards. One of our pilots, taking off for a patrol, drifted to starboard and hit the 'Huff-Duff' mast ahead of the Island, leaving bits of his mainplane behind. Reasoning that since he was still airborne, he might as well carry on and do the job; that is what he did.

Engaging the boats. Our naval aircraft accounted for less than 5% of all boats lost. The Swordfish had a serious drawback when carrying out a depth-charge attack on a submerging boat, particularly against the wind; it arrived too late. Also, against one staying up to shoot, the odds were against arriving at all. German gunnery was notoriously accurate. Therefore came doctrine requiring us to call for a fighter to join in a synchronized attack.

This was an acquired skill, well demonstrated by 8 USN escort carriers on the New York - North Africa convoy run. Their Avenger/Wildcat combination was compatible. They sank 31 boats.

The ship's first close action came during return from taking part, with Portugese approval, of our occupation of the Azores. Two wildcats dealt with a snooping FW Condor. Next off Ireland, our first U-boat which, we later learned, had been damaged by Coastal Command.

A conning tower began to emerge between us and another carrier and in it appeared a head wearing a white cap. Both vanished smartly. We had a Wildcat on standby, the pilot seeing the apparition in his mirror. Also a Swordfish, ready-armed with depth-charges. That was scrambled within three minutes and sank that boat as it tried to resurface astern of the convoy. U-666.

For further excitement I now move to the Arctic. There

almost half of all boats sunk, with our naval aircraft involved, occurred.

Constant air cover for Russian convoys did not start until 15 months before Germany surrendered. The route was to the ice barrier before turning east into the Barents Sea and to either Archangel or Murmansk. In our time, that barrier receded no further than 300 miles from North Cape, leaving a pinch-point within easy reach of enemy bases and airfields.

The number of ships negotiating that was a small fraction of those sailing the Atlantic, but the ratio of losses was three times greater. Others were temporarily stranded, or otherwise, disabled.

In April 1944 the Admiralty decided to collect these and bring them back. They sent 22 escorts, including four RCN, and two escort carriers, ours being one. We had already given protection to the Home Fleet during the first air attack on "Tirpitz", sheltered in a Norwegian fjord.

Our run to Murmansk was also to bring back a Russian Admiral, his staff and a crew to collect our gift of the old battleship "Royal Sovereign". The Russian warship at the 2005 Spithead Review was the, "Admiral Levchenko". This was he who, with his staff, took passage with us, the crew scattered among the merchant ships. Among those detailed to look after that staff, I drew the Political Officer. Later events allowed no time for that. What followed was, I believe, the closest the Russians came to a carrier at work before building their own.

Convoy RA-59 sailed from Kola, downstream from Murmansk, in late April when nights are half light. A day later a Wildcat from the other carrier, "Activity" dealt with a snooper, after which that carrier ceased all further work due to snow on its steel deck. A merchant ship was torpedoed, the convoy's only loss, as it was ours in 12 months of work. A three day running tussle with the boats followed.

Our wooden deck had steam vents running across, which helped those with brooms and shovels. There were frequent snow squalls. Now on our own we kept, night and day two Swordfish in the air, making many sightings and pushing boats down. A Wildcat remained on standby, rarely used. One joined in a synchronized attack, making three passes. A wasted effort because, when the Swordfish finally arrived, the pilot had forgotten to make his switches.

The deck had much movement. We needed full concentration for landing. In the pilots cockpit the cold hits between goggles and helmet, and numbs the senses. Therefore, during return, we popped a benzedrine tablet. It worked; and, the squadron only lost one tail wheel.

We now know that 12 boats tried to get close enough to

fire acoustic torpedoes. They fired 1 of these and claimed a dozen victims. 17 missed.

Most of the boats we sighted submerged before we could close. Those that did not, used 20mm shell, close enough to smell. We sank three hosts, without support, two by a pilot carrying depth-charges. He already lived a charmed life. When we first formed he led a flight near South Hampton balloon barrage on return from which, to the surprise of us all, a deep gash was found in his spinner with 100' cable wrapped behind. After sinking one of his boats, a 20mm unexploded shell was found lodged in a mainplane.

The third boat was detected by the observer on his ASV set, with which he guided his pilot through cloud, before telling him to turn 90 degrees to port and dive, and he would see the target. There appeared not one, but two boats, chatting to each other. Rockets were fired at both, sinking one. Throughout 70 hours I do not recall that our ship ever had to leave 'the box'. The deck was always ready for us on return.

Long after the war was over, one learned that the Senior Officer Escorts report on our carrier's work was quite exceptional. I think our squadron agrees that this was due, not least, to the Captain's handling of his ship. He was former aircrew, then a rarity for such a Command.

The Russians, throughout, paid close attention, too much so. Sentries were placed outside some spaces. Their Admiral tried to get into the small, very crowded and busy Operations Room and was told to push off, but not so politely.

Aircrew saw little of his staff until, the evening before entering harbour, we joined them in the Wardroom. An occasion they chose to show their capacity for strong liquor. We stood back and watched.

The next evening we took them to "Two-Ton Tessie's" place in Gourrock, a hotel over-looking 'Tail-of-the-Bank'. There we encouraged them to sample the local beer. They took to that with gusto. When they left they were a sorry looking lot; a row of heads hanging over the tailboard of a 15 cwt. They say that "Royal Sovereign" passed sideways under the Forth Bridge on departure from Rosyth. That Russian convoy was our last. After another "Tirpitz" operation we worked from ashore.

To conclude - No matter what our aircraft or work, my generation of the Fleet Air Arm is surely grateful to the Heritage Trust and to others, who, today, work to keep our bit of the Royal Navy's history alive.

Bruce Vibert

COMMODORE PARK

submitted by Ron Beard

In the early 1950s, a plot of land on eastern outskirts of Dartmouth bounded by Number 7 highway on the north, Valleyfield Ave. on the west and Woodlawn Rd, on the south and east, was beginning to develop as a subdivision.

To honour the RCN it was decided to call it Commodore Park. Of all the streets in the park, 14 were named after



The second one shows a brief history of Commodore Park and also a brief history of the Battle of the Atlantic. Beside this is the list of all the ships lost with a short biography for each one along with the number of losses on each ship.

I have lived in “the park” since 1958 and one incident stands out in my mind to show the connection of “the park” to Armed Forces.

At the start of the Cuban Crisis, a recall went out to all armed forces personnel to report to duty. It was close to midnight and it looked like the lights went on in every home in “the park”. As the cars streamed out of “the park”, the traffic to Shearwater, Stadacona and the Dockyards grew quite quickly. To the family members left behind, it was like a mass evacuation which left an eerie feeling in many households.

To this day you can walk the streets of Commodore Park and bump into many of the original, now retired inhabitants. The faces have grown older and the hair greyer and thinner, the stride a little shorter and slower, but we are still around.



RCN ships sunk during WW11 and ships that have since served.

At the junction of Louisburgh Lane and Spikenard Street,



a plot of land was retained as a small local park and with the co-operation of Maritime Command, HRM and many local supporters, suitable signage was erected in the park.

On the western border of the park, beside a walkway, two large plaques were installed. One shows a map of Commodore Park with all the street names clearly shown. Beside the map are photographs of the ships named.



ABAR Guy Lavalee - VU32 'C' Hangar

***DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN
YOUR 50/50 TICKETS.
GOOD LUCK!***

LIFE AFTER "SERVICE" 1

Reflection on my life after I left the military
by J. Paquette

It had been a pretty good run, over 8000 hours flying as a Navy pilot flying the TRACKER, Instrument Check Pilot Instructor, Command ICP flying the DC-3, T-33 and KIOWA, back to the Navy flying the SEA KING, Squadron Air Officer, eight years in SAR flying the LABRADOR including three years in Ottawa and two Commanding my own squadron

But by 1990, after 31 years in the "Service" we were heading back to Ottawa for the third time on the New SAR Helicopter program ... but I knew that they weren't going to buy a new SAR helicopter. Besides, I was up to here ... with some of the "Killer Bees", Butt out and BMI. Finally I knew that my flying career was over and my future would be umbrellas and bus stops.

It was time to do something else ... but I had no idea what that something else would involve nor how far that former "Service" would reach.



Hero shot in Fisheries S-76

FISHERIES SURVEILLANCE AND SEARCH AND RESCUE

We were house hunting in Ottawa when the phone rang in the hotel room. "Would I like to join Cougar Helicopters as their Search and Rescue Training Captain operating out of Yarmouth flying the Sikorsky S-76 helicopter on a Fisheries contract?" Would I!

I should have consulted with Joan before I accepted because it took her a few years to really forgive me for the change of plans. In the end it all worked out for her as she began a very successful and rewarding eighteen year career in Yarmouth with residential support for the mentally and physically challenged ... thank goodness!

The Cougar Base Manager in Yarmouth was none other than Mike Mason, former TRACKER pilot whom I had met when we did the KIOWA Course together in 1974. At that time he was on his way to a short career in SEA KINGS.

My position with Cougar was on a short term contract with no idea if it would be renewed. Nevertheless, we committed to purchasing the house we were renting in the following year. Our house in Summerside had been rented out in anticipation of the Ottawa move so we had no capital to buy a house right away.

The next year our house sold and we bought the Yarmouth house but ... the mill and the mine in Yarmouth closed (1000 jobs lost) and there was talk that our contract was not going to be renewed in 1992. Things were not looking good

Fisheries did renew the Surveillance and SAR contract but not with Cougar. Fortunately Canadian Helicopters, having won the contract lacked any SAR and Surveillance expertise and hired me, sight unseen, as the Base Manager and Training Captain.

Just a note on Base Manager ... it is just that, you manage the Base ie. do the reports, buy the supplies and make the schedules. You have absolutely no authority over the engineers (who generally seemed to resent ex military pilots) nor are you in any way a flight leader or career manager for the pilots.

The years in Fisheries with Cougar and Canadian were challenging. We held standby SAR Standby and flew Surveillance and other missions on a 24/7 with two full crews serving seven days at a time. Much of the flying was at night at low level and in the next six years I flew over 700 hours night, doubling my 31 year service total. In addition, we operated on the fringe of the law by continually landing in 100ft /1200RVR. Nothing else would have worked in Yarmouth where we were blessed to have an ILS but cursed to have some of the lowest ceilings in the Maritimes.

For surveillance we used dual GPSs, a computer plotter, weather radar and a 13 million candle-power Nite-sun

searchlight aimed by one of our two Mission Crewmen. For identifying perpetrators and to have that information for the courts we video taped them with a high definition 8 mm TV camera shoulder operated by our second Mission Crewman as he hung out the open door (or later porthole) in the cabin. These Mission Crewmen, who also performed as Hoist Operators and Rescue men, were primarily retired CF SAR Technicians some of whom I had served with in the SAR days.

Our most memorable flight involved catching a dozen US fishing vessels dragging for scallops in Canadian waters. Using our camera and searchlight, we located and identified ten of the twelve vessels which resulted in almost \$1.0 Million in fines, unfortunately paid to the US Fisheries Protection Service

Day and night SAR missions included medevac hoists from fishing vessels, rescues from sinking vessels, pump drops and in one memorable case, hoisting a very sick lady from the aft deck of a cruise liner. On the day of the "Perfect Storm" I was pilot when we snagged our hoist cable on the mast of a fishing vessel as we tried to pick up the third crew member. As the cable parted at the hook end and rebounded it struck our main rotors and then our tail rotor for an instant cutting the cable at the hoist and damaging our main and tail rotor blades beyond repair. Thanks to the strength of the fiberglass blades, we were able to get home without incident.

In 1995, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans amalgamated with Coast Guard. When my boss asked my opinion on the impact of this decision, I said that we were "dead in the water". I felt that Coast Guard had always resisted implementing a Search and Rescue helicopter role and now they "owned" a civilian contractor doing just that.

In August 1995 our contract was allowed to expire. Coast Guard replaced our S-76 which routinely operated in all weather conditions by day and night to 200 miles off shore with a BO-105, day VFR only helicopter limited to 50 miles off shore ... and I was out of a job

The good news was that Joan was working and I had a pension ... oh yes, and I finally got to collect Unemployment Insurance.

AEROBATIC TRAINING

With nothing to do and a sweet little Cessna C-150 AEROBAT at the flying club, I decided to create Immelmann Aerobatics and become an aerobatics instructor. After a little searching, I discovered that the nearest Class One Aerobatic Instructor was none other than Ron Holden, a former CO of 880 Squadron. Ron was now in Windsor as the Manager of the Windsor Flying Club.

After a wonderful week with Ron and his club's CITABREA, I was a "shakey C" and ready to take on some students.

It was a great plan but there weren't a lot of "takers" in the Yarmouth area. Transport Canada's plan to issue an Aerobatics endorsement had fallen through. I felt that the chance for an Aerobatics endorsement at the end of the training would have been a strong motivator for pilots in the area.

The other shortcoming in my plan was the aircraft itself. When the aircraft is a C-150 and the instructor is somewhat over 200 pounds (and I'm being generous) it doesn't leave a lot of room for fuel and a student. With only half tanks and the limited capability of the 150, we could climb to 5000 feet, demonstrate or practice three manoeuvres, climb back to 5000 feet, do two more and set up on final to land. Nevertheless I and my "students" had a great time and I even planned a flight that had me upside down for my 10,000th hour.

Still one of the greatest mysteries of aeronautics is how that C-150 could complete an Immelmann with two big guys in the cockpit and only 60 knots on the clock.

Next I become an Air Ambulance Pilot...

Commemorative Flight Helmet for HRH the Duke of Cambridge

As some of you are aware, 12 Wing had the honour of flying His Royal Highness, the Duke of Cambridge (Prince William), in our very own CH124 Waterbird. What is less well known is that HRH was presented with a one-of-a-kind commemorative flight helmet as a gift from 12 Wing to the Duke (see back inside cover). The finished helmet is the result of a collaboration between 12 Wing graphic designer Steve Coyle and local artist Travis Roma. As well, the helmet is displayed on a beautiful custom stand that was designed and manufactured by 12 AMS's Cpl Desbiens. To say that HRH was touched and impressed by the gift would be an understatement; some members of HRH's personal staff even opined that this was the nicest gift that HRH had received to date.

Shown in the inside back cover photo with HRH the Duke of Cambridge and the Duchess of Cambridge are Lieutenant-Colonel (then Major) Patrick MacNamara (far left), Captain Josh Willemsen and Colonel Sam Michaud 12 Wing Commander.
